MAY RUTHERFORD.
BY MISS LOUISE OLIVIA HUNTER.
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"Good bye, dearest mother, I expect to be very happy to-night," were the words of May Rutherford, as equipped for a party she entered the sitting-room, and threw her white arms caressingly around her parent's neck. The mother looked for an instant earnestly into that fair young face, then bending forward she tenderly imprinted a kiss upon the pure brow of her child, and when the maiden turned from her and hastened toward the door, her eyes still followed that slight form with a gaze of mingled anxiety and admiration, till it disappeared from her sight, and then sinking back into her seat, she leaned her face pensively upon her hand and remained for some moments lost in a deep revery. She was thinking of the period when she too, as lovely and sunny-hearted as the fair being who had just left her side, had gladly mingled with the gay and busy world: and how bright and unfading had seemed its pleasures! And then her memory reverted to the present—and she remembered how one by one her fondest hopes had perished, leaving her widowed, and weary with the burden of life's sorrows.

"Fare thee well, sweet Eve," said May, as she passed a younger sister in the hall, "don't look so wistfully at me, darling," she added, for the young girl had that day expressed an earnest wish to be in her place, "your turn will soon come, dear sis—a few months more, and then how the world will ring with the praises of *la belle* Eveline!" And softly pressing her lips to her sister's cheek, she turned quickly away, and in another instant was seated in the carriage and rapidly borne toward the scene of festivity.

May Rutherford had said that she expected to be very happy that evening—why she had formed that expectation she had not asked herself, or it would have cost her some blushes to announce it. But if when, half an hour later, she stood in the brilliantly lighted drawing-room of her hostess, with a certain Arthur Stanton by her side, she had questioned herself as to the cause of her fully realized happiness, it would not have been very difficult to have discovered it. Stanton was a young lawyer, handsome and talented, who had lately, by the death of an uncle, become heir to a large estate on condition that he assumed the name of his deceased relative. He was both amiable and intelligent, with an open, pleasing countenance, much sought after by manœuvering mammas, and regarded

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as the beau ideal of manly perfection by their marriageable daughters.

Until he beheld our lovely heroine, Stanton had never looked upon one who possessed the slightest claim to his fancy, but the striking beauty of May Rutherford took him by surprise, and he soon became deeply interested in the fair young girl.

May had never seemed more captivating than upon this evening; her every motion was full of poetry. Enveloped in a robe of gossamer like texture, she glided through the mazes of the dance with sylph-like grace, while the eyes of Arthur Stanton followed her movements with plainly evident delight.

"A sister of mine is here this evening," remarked Stanton, as at the close of the first dance he had seated himself beside his beautiful partner, "will you allow me the pleasure of introducing her to you, Miss Rutherford?"

May had scarcely time for an affirmative reply, when her companion turned from her and walked toward a young lady who was stationed in a distant part of the room, in lively conversation with a group of gentlemen. Another moment and he again stood beside May, and upon his arm leaned the lady whom he introduced as Miss Lindsay, his sister. For an instant May Rutherford's eyes rested upon the face of the stranger—then with a cold, formal bend of the head she replied to the introduction. Miss Lindsay was equally reserved, she made no attempt at conversation, but moved away sooner even than etiquette sanctioned, while a slight flush which was unnoticed save by her brother, rose to her cheek. Scarcely knowing what to think Stanton had been an amazed observer, and when his sister had disappeared, turning to May Rutherford, he said in a tone of inquiry—

"You and Ella have met before, I think?"

"We have."

The words were uttered in a voice of measured coldness, and surprised and pained the young man raised his eyes earnestly to the speaker's face, May however seemed anxious to avoid that gaze, and just as Stanton was about to ask an explanation of the foregoing scene she received a message from their hostess, Mrs. Norton, and hastening in search of her, he was left alone to muse on what had passed.

For the remainder of that evening May continued to avoid her late-partner. Whenever he came near she was always busily engaged in lively conversation with some one of the numerous circle that never failed to surround her, and if he ventured a few common place remarks, they were invariably replied to briefly and coldly. Piqued at her inexplicable reserve, he at length withdrew from her side with the intention of seeking his sister, and endeavoring to elicit from her the cause, for he was convinced that it was through her agency alone that he had incurred it.

May Rutherford returned home that night with a very heavy heart. Through the whole of that long evening she had been all life and animation—never before had she been so courted and admired—and yet that wild exuberance of spirits was in reality assumed; and while she gaily joined in the mirth of those around her, her mind was filled with despondency, for it reverted to the truth that she was about to cast aside the homage of a noble and manly heart. Not without cause had she turned so coldly from Arthur Stanton. His sister had once been her dearest friend. They had been schoolmates together—sat side by side for years, studied from the same book, and obeyed the mandates of the same gentle teacher; yet in an instant was the bond of friendship severed. A few unjust words spoken in a moment of excitement by Ella Lindsay had caused the indignant blood to rush in a bright torrent over the cheeks and brow of the sensitive May, while proudly and haughtily she turned from the friend of her girlhood; and since that hour there had been no intercourse between them. Miss Lindsay would fain have asked forgiveness for the words, which, obeying the impulse of the moment, she had suffered to pass her lips—but the remembrance of that haughty glance deterred her, for she was too proud to proffer what she feared would be refused. And so May, whose resentment against one she loved could not be lasting, vainly awaited an apology, without which she felt that they would never again be friends. Till that evening they had not met for nearly two years.

But the knowledge that Arthur Stanton was her brother fell like a leaden weight upon the heart of May Rutherford. During the days of their intimacy Ella had often alluded to her brother, but by reason of his protracted absence abroad, May had never beheld him; and so for months she had contantly met Stanton in the gay circles in which she moved as a "bright, particular star," his change of name from the conditions of his uncle's will having prevented all suspicion of his relationship to the friend of her early girlhood. And when the truth burst upon her she immediately resolved that as the brother of Ella Lindsay he must never be other than a stranger to her, and that determination was instantly acted upon. She feared to trust herself longer in his society, for his attentions to her had of late become extremely pointed, and she was very unhappy at the thought that

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they had been received with deep interest, and knew that it would be a long time ere the impressions which his high and noble qualities had made upon her heart, could be effaced.

The following morning May Rutherford was stationed in the sitting-room, when a card was brought to her with the information that its owner begged an immediate interview.

"Say to Mr. Stanton that I am engaged at present, and must therefore decline the pleasure of seeing him," was the young girl's reply.

The servant departed with the message, and when he had disappeared May Rutherford sank upon the nearest seat and wept long and bitterly. That Stanton had called with the intention of seeking an explanation of her change of manner toward him was evident—but she knew that she could give him none without betraying the wrong she had experienced from his sister. And what would then be the result? Would he not solicit Ella Lindsay to ask oblivion of the past?—and from this thought May's mind revolted. Gladly, willingly would she have extended the hand of reconciliation to her estranged but still loved friend, but she wished not for an apology tendered through the persuasions of a brother, and perhaps vouchsafed solely for that brother's sake.

One afternoon about six months after the events last recorded, May Rutherford was sitting alone in her own pleasant and tasteful apartment. Her face wore a shade of deep thought, for her memory had stolen back to happy days past, and to reminiscences of one whom she had striven in vain to forget.

"Ah! sister mine—in a brown study as usual!" exclaimed a gay voice at her elbow, and turning quickly round she beheld her sister Eveline, who had just returned from a shopping expedition.

May answered the remark with a smile, and then again relapsed into a revery. Meanwhile Eveline divested herself of her walking apparel, and then sat down to re-examine her purchases.

"As I entered Stewart's new store about an hour ago," she said to her sister, "I met your old friend Ella Lindsay. She spoke to me very politely and kindly, and I learned that her brother and herself are to be at Anna Cleveland's party to-morrow evening. I told her that we were to be there also—but, dear me! May, you haven't looked at one of my purchases! Here are the fans and the gloves, the ribbons and the flowers, and half a score of other things—do pray take a peep at them, for I am in a great hurry to know your opinion of my selections."

"They are very beautiful, and do great credit to your taste," was her sister's reply, giving a slight glance at the contents of the packages.

"They are very beautiful, and do great credit to my taste," repeated Eveline pontingly, "do they indeed! And how do you know that, Miss May? Pretty encouragement it is to be sure to spend half a day ransacking all the principal stores in the city, to be honored with merely the least token of a glance at my parcels, and a few set words for my pains!"

"Dear Eve—pardon me," returned her companion, drawing the young girl toward her, and affectionately kissing her cheek, "but you know, love, that Madame L—— used to tell us it was very improper and unlady-like to fall into ecstacies upon any subject whatever." The words were spoken with a forced attempt at playfulness, which her sister was fortunately too busy to notice.

The intelligence that Arthur Stanton and his sister were of the number invited to Miss Cleveland's party the next evening had not tended by any means to raise May Rutherford's spirits, for the idea of again meeting them was painful in the extreme.

"Mercy on us! How woe-begone you *do* look, May! One would think you were preparing for a funeral instead of a party!" was the exclamation of the lively Eveline, as the next morning the two sisters were sitting together. May had been busy arranging a wreath of delicate artificial roses which were destined for her hair, but suddenly desisting from her occupation, she was for some moments buried in earnest meditation. A slight blush suffused her cheek as Eveline spoke, and instantly rousing herself she resumed her task.

The ensuing evening found May and her sister members of the brilliant multitude that thronged the rooms of the lovely and fashionable Miss Cleveland. It was Eveline's first party, for she had just escaped from the restraints of the school-room, and her youthful and innocent heart was in a corresponding tumult of delight. May too looked gay and happy, and none who gazed upon that beautiful and smiling face could have guessed what a host of sorrowful feelings lay hidden beneath that animated exterior.

Fatigued with the dance, May Rutherford had stolen away that evening from a group of friends toward an open window in an obscure corner of one of the apartments. While she was seated there Miss Lindsay and a gentleman approached, and, without observing her, took a station quite near. For some moments they were unaware of May's close proximity to them, till Ella Lindsay, happening to cast a sudden glance around, her eyes fell upon the form of her old and once valued friend. May Rutherford met that gaze calmly—and there was no token of recognition

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on the part of either. Miss Lindsay immediately resumed her conversation with her companion.

"My brother was slightly indisposed, and, therefore, unable to accompany me here this evening," she replied in answer to an inquiry concerning his absence—"I suppose you know that Arthur departs for Europe in a few days? His health has suffered a material change since his return home, and he is very anxious to travel again."

"Yes," rejoined the gentleman, "so he informed me. I have remarked that Stanton is much altered of late, especially in manner—for his usual flow of spirits seems to have deserted him entirely. If I did not know better from his general avoidance of your sex, Miss Lindsay, I should pronounce that he was in love," he added laughingly.

"Or rather that he had been disappointed in love," returned Ella Lindsay, in the same tone. At that moment the signal that dancing was about to recommence was given, and Miss Lindsay and her companion rose and moved quickly away.

"Were you aware that the beautiful Miss Rutherford was very near us when we were conversing a few minutes ago?" was the query that Miss Lindsay's partner addressed to her during a pause in the dance. She replied in the affirmative.

"I do not think she can be well this evening. Did you notice how pale she was?"

"No," replied Miss Lindsay, looking up in surprise, "I merely glanced at her once, and then thought that she looked extremely well."

May Rutherford had indeed been an auditor to that conversation. Arthur Stanton—he whose image she had vainly endeavored to banish was going far away to a distant land. He was suffering too—suffering in health and spirits—could it be that she was the cause? Could it be that his sister's words had been intended for her ear? But this last suggestion was instantly driven from her mind as she remembered that Ella had never beheld her with Stanton but once—and that most probably she knew not their intercourse had ever been more than that of common civility. Was it to be wondered that the thought of Arthur Stanton's departure—the idea that they might never again meet, had caused her cheek to become strangely pale, while her heart throbbed with the wildest emotion?

Almost overcome with her feelings, May at last glided unnoticed from those crowded apartments, and ascending to the dressing-room which was now deserted, she threw herself upon a lounge near the fire, and burying her face in her hands, remained for some time in meditation too deep and painful for tears. Suddenly an arm softly encircled her, and a voice, a loved and familiar voice, murmured in her ear—"May, dearest May, will you not forgive me?" and the next moment May Rutherford lay weeping upon the bosom of her long-estranged friend.

In the explanation that ensued, May learned what is already known to the reader, with the addition that the day after Mrs. Norton's party, Ella Lindsay had despatched her brother to her residence with a note, containing an urgent appeal for forgiveness. May's refusal to see Stanton confirmed Ella in her opinion that she would never be pardoned, and caused her to doubt whether Arthur had ever been looked upon with favor. So from that moment she resolved to relinquish all hope of ever regaining the friend she had lost, while she also endeavored by every means in her power to induce her brother to forget his disappointment, a task which he found very difficult to accomplish. The remark addressed to her that evening that Miss Rutherford had looked unusually pale, aroused her suspicions as to May's total insensibility to Stanton's merits, and determined to learn the truth, she had followed her to the dressing-room, and sought a reconciliation in the manner already described.

The following morning Arthur Stanton called at the residence of our gentle heroine, and this time he had the happiness of finding her disengaged. What passed in that interview it would not do to repeat; but certain it is that it had the effect of causing the young gentleman to abandon his intention of pursuing another European tour, the consequence of which was that a few weeks afterward May Rutherford become Mrs. Stanton, an event which was followed by all the usual festivities that accompany such occasions.

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THE HAUNTED RUIN.
BY C. J. PETERSON.
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THE HAUNTED RUIN.

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It is remarkable that so little has been done to perpetuate the legends of the Delaware. Originally the sacred river of the Indian tribes, and subsequently the haunt of buccaneers, its waters are still rife with traditions of the aborigines and marvellous tales of buried treasure. Its poetic age was before Penn visited its shores. The primitive settlers were Swedes, a plain, frugal and religious people, whose imaginations partook of the weird character of the long winter nights of their native land: and hence from the days of the first settlement until those of the erudite Acrelius and the gossipping Holm, both historians of the colony, the region abounded with miraculous stories of witchcraft, of fishes with human heads, and of the other wonders of a credulous people. While the Hudson has its Irving, the great West a Hall, the South a Simmes, and New England a horde of busy chroniclers, the Delaware, the first in legendary lore of all, has been left neglected and unsung. We owe it to the manes of the first settler on its shores, himself a Swede, though sailing in the employ of the states of Holland, Captain Pieterson de Vries, to preserve one of these traditions at least from oblivion, and picture the manners of this simple people before the recollection of them has altogether faded from our midst.

On the shores of the Delaware, and not far from the town of Squankum, there was once upon a time, a little, low, weather-stained church, which had been built by the Swedes in the days of their puissance. It had formerly boasted a belfry, and been encompassed by a grave-yard wall; but time had stripped it of the one, and for half a century the other had been dumb. Standing in the centre of a wide, sandy common, surrounded by old grave-stones, ruined fences, and whole legions of mullins, it was no bad emblem of the decay which had fallen on the primitive race who were its architects. The roof had long since sunk in; the walls were ricketty and crumbling; the door had tumbled from its hinges and lay rotting by the threshold; a few half starved sheep browsed on the scanty herbage of the ancient cemetery; and the cawing of an army of crows, who made the old church their favorite resort, and sailed incessantly to and fro through its broken windows, gave the scene an aspect of dreary desolation.

Not far from this ruin there is a wild road through the woods, which leads to a quiet, secluded nook, unusually fertile for that sandy region. In the midst of this little valley, stands a wide, one-storied tenement, built of thick-hewn logs and carefully ceiled inside, a distinction which was considered quite aristocratic when that old house was built by Sven Schutz, a hundred years ago. The dwelling is approached by a lane, guarded with rows of trees on either sides, and fringed with blackberry bushes that make a hedge around the zig-zag fence. The place is now gone to decay, but hard by a barn was wont to display its stores of grain through every crevice; while from the summit of the roof a wooden chanticleer bristled up incessantly. The whole place, even fifty years ago when our story begins, seemed to belong to a bygone time. Moss-covered fences; antique implements of husbandry; a well with the primitive pole poised on high; and a shaggy plough horse with one eye gave that old place a dreamy and quiet look, so that the traveller on entering this little dell almost fancied he had been transported out of the actual world into one of those enchanted vallies on which the Norse legends love to dwell.

To come to our story. In the good old days when whipping posts and three cornered hats were still in fashion, there dwelt in that quiet valley a lineal descendant of one of the early Swedes. Sven Schutz, like all his race, was of simple habits and small wishes. He farmed his few acres in happiness nor cared for more. His good dame made the homespun which he and his family wore as contentedly as if it had been royal velvet. Every Sunday he either walked or rode to the nearest church, which was six miles off, and by his sincere but unostentatious piety, he came in time to be regarded as the patriarch of the vicinity.

Sven loved to keep up the venerable customs of his fathers now long disused. He was exact in his notions of filial obedience, and when his boys grew up, he laid on them the work of the farm, henceforth confining his own personal labor to a portion of the summer, when he visited the salt meadows to cut hay, which he afterward transported home and sold to his neighbors. The rest of the time, Sven devoted to hunting; for he came of a race of Nimrods. No man had shot so many bears in all the colony, and he and his father before him knew the haunts of the deer as well as I know the steps to my dining-room. All the year round, on fit hunting days, Sven shouldered his gun at day-break, summoned his dog and set out into the forest, whistling a monotonous tune that could rarely pluck up courage to get higher than two or three notes. And when night drew on,

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and his old dame stood vainly looking through the falling shades, that same unvaried whistle, long before he came in sight, announced his return. Then, building a roaring fire of hickory logs, Sven would seat himself to smoke in the chimney corner, first summoning two of his stoutest boys, and telling them where to go in the morning in order to bring home the deer; for Sven never carried his own game, following in this the good old Swedish maxim that the children should honor the parent. And honor enough Sven obtained if reverence increases with numbers, for—heaven knows how!—but he was father of two and twenty heirs all born in that venerable homestead.

Twice a year Sven made a journey to the city, in order to exchange a few dozens of deer-skins, and a haunch or two of venison, for a new supply of ammunition, and sundry luxuries to be given to his dame. Twice a year also, two respectable gentlemen, dressed in buckskin breeches, long under vests, coats with wide skirts, and enormous silver buckles in their shoes, came from the city to hunt a few days with Sven. At such times what a stir the good dame made. Eggs were ransacked from under the barn—the necks of uproarious roosters wrung—flitches of ham and venison brought into play—and sundry old cracked China cups, which had been collecting for the last four generations, drawn forth from a venerable cupboard in the corner. Such a commotion as took place in the old house! And then too what a time they had every evening at the fireside eating apples, and drinking cider, while Sven told long stories about New Sweden, haunted houses, and things that happened the Lord knows how. Among these there was a legend of the old church, which had made the hair of every urchin in the neighborhood to stand on end at its recital, for the last century. It was a simple but thrilling tale. In the early days of the settlement a bride in going to church with her maidens, had been killed by a bullet fired from the neighboring forest. She had been borne into the church to die, while a hot pursuit was started after the murderer, who was feretted out and found to be an unsuccessful lover. Ever since she had been said to haunt the spot, dressed in white, and moaning piteously. Not a soul, therefore, could be got to pass the old church after nightfall.

It was well worth a day's journey to see the wondering faces, and knowing shake of the head with which, on such occasions, the legend of Sven was greeted; and it would do the heart good to witness the solemn gravity with which his listeners took their pipes from their mouths, leaned their chins upon their hands, and hung breathlessly upon his words. At these narrations their sittings would often be protracted into midnight: the dame's spinning-wheel would gradually stop—the fire smoulder slowly away—the candle flicker low in its socket—a shadowy indistinctness fill the ample room—and the old furniture in the corners seem to assume a thousand fantastic shapes. When the listeners separated for the night, the younger portion would creep stealthily to bed, and burying themselves head and ears in the covers, dream and tremble by turns till morning.

Much, however, as these stories were credited in the vicinity, there was one blade who affected to disbelieve them, thrusting his tongue into his cheek and winking whenever they were spoken of before strangers. In justice to the neighborhood we must own that he was an interloper from New England, who, having emigrated in search of a fortune, had found it at last in the shape of a wife, the shrewish landlady of the Squankum inn. He was no unapt representative of a class which, fifty years ago, poured annually down our coasts like herring shoals to feed on the fat things of the land. Long, lank and ungainly; with a hatchet face and little, gray eyes; a freckled skin and a head of sandy hair that looked like a tumbled hay-mow—you could see him when he walked, which he always did at a quick gait, his legs projecting half a mile below his trowsers, and his arms going like an old fashioned telegraph working a despatch. Had he possessed more wit he would have been shrewd: as it was he was only cunning and skeptical. Steadfast was anything but what his name betokened. No permanent occupation could fetter his lazy habits. He assisted his dame in the tavern, and earned an occasional penny by driving a neighbor to town, or acting as his lawyer before the justice court. He could shoe horses, write a will, back a filly, or oyster in the bay better than any man thereabouts. He was never more pleased than when dawdling with a gossip over a bowl, or lounging, on a sunshiny day, upon the bridge to fish. Had it not been for his helpmate the tavern would have gone to wreck; but what Steadfast wanted in application his good dame made up in tyranny. To use a vulgar phrase, "she wore the breeches;" and however roystering her spouse was out of doors, he skulked about his home most sheepishly. All his overweening confidence disappeared at his threshold, and he carried water, rocked the baby, and even saw his dog kicked without complaint.

It was on an evening unusually stormy in the domestic realm, that Steadfast stole out in despair, tired of having it cast in his teeth, by his

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rosy helpmate, that she was working her skin to the bone in his support. It was a clear, frosty night in the early part of autumn, and a light breeze was rustling softly among the withered leaves. A myriad of stars glimmered on high, giving a dreamy light to the landscape, but making the dark shadows of the huge trees only more mysterious and solemn. As he emerged upon the river the tide was coming in, and the low swell like a mimic surf rippled faintly on the ear. The wind came fresher and more damp across the water: and the western shore of the river lay in a mass of shapeless shadow. At times the white crests of the tiny billows rolled up into the light, and occasionally the tall mast of a sloop, or the wings of a whip-poor-will floated lazily between him and the opposite horizon. Scarcely caring whither he went, Steadfast insensibly wended his way toward the house of Schutz; and just at the entrance of the valley he fell in with the worthy man and his guests, returning from a hunt. The sight of venison was a savor in the eyes of the belabored wight, and contriving to throw himself in the way of an invitation, he was soon forgetting his woes beside the hearth of Sven.

Never had steadfast eaten such a supper: he was too much in a hurry to talk. Ham, eggs, venison, and fowls, went down like magic—hoe cakes, batter cakes, short cakes, and all sorts of cakes disappeared in a twinkling—and the coffee—a luxury rarely vouchsafed to him, was disposed of with inward thanksgivings. His heart was in a glow of content that reflected itself from his face, and he congratulated his stars, between each mouthful, on the lucky chance which had brought him such a God-send.

Oh! that I had breath to describe the circle around the fireside—the jokes that were cracked, the cider that was drunk, and above all the veritable legends that were related. The good dame told how, in her honey-moon, when returning home from a sleigh-ride, she had seen the house illuminated, and heard the music of a violin within; but as soon as her husband spoke, all grew dark, the revelry was at an end, and she beheld a crowd of dusky figures vanish in a flash of lightning: in proof whereof the bricks of the chimney-top were found next morning strewed upon the roof. Then there was an old, brisk, little withered grandame, who made the hair stand on end with stories of Blackbeard, and the spirits that were said to haunt the burial places of his treasure. If she stopped a minute to take breath there was one of the gentlemen in buckskin breeches to tell about witches, and haunted houses, in the city; until what between the cider, the fast darkening room, and the low voices of the speakers, Steadfast began to start at every voice, and run cold at the look of the narrator. But I only wish I could picture his dismay when Sven knocked the ashes from his pipe, drew his chair up closer to his hearers, and began in a whisper the legend of the spectre-bride, accompanying his voice with sundry shakes of the head, turning up of his eyes, deep sighs, and looks of wonder. Steadfast fairly got bewildered—his brain seemed of a sudden topsy-turvy—and his teeth chattered as he remembered he should have to pass the old church in his way home. But he plucked up courage, and even went so far as to laugh faintly at the legend.

The night was far advanced, and the moon had vanished in the forest, when Steadfast left his host, and took his devious course up the valley. The wild road leading to the church was overhung by gigantic hemlocks, that seemed to his eyes to dilate and swell in the darkness. The sky was covered with drifting clouds; and a few stars only glimmered through the foliage. The air was damp and chilly, sighing along the forest like the voice of some one in distress; while occasionally an owl hooted across his path, or a wild cry floated from the distant hill-side. Anon it seemed as if the trees spun around, and then an old blasted pine ahead danced merrily up and down. He rubbed his eyes, shook himself to be awake, staring around him in astonishment: but at last his limbs began to totter, and his teeth to chatter. Nevertheless he doggedly kept on his way, whistling an old song to keep up his spirits, and looking straight ahead, though all the time shaking in his shoes, lest some frisky ghost should attack him from behind. The truth was, after all his boasting, he was as firm a believer in such things as any one—as Sven said, those who make the greatest noise are generally the most arrant cowards.

As he trudged shivering along, the road grew more intricate, the shadows deepened around him, and the stars twinkled fainter through the quivering leaves. A gloomy canopy of black, reaching from pole to pole, was slowly ascending from the western horizon, and shrouding the sky in obscurity; while the sudden rising of the wind as it roared through the forest, and whirled the dead leaves from the branches filled him with an unaccountable dread. He thought of all he had heard that night, recalling to mind the many sneers he had been guilty of thereon. What if these legends should be true?—what if their ghostships should take revenge on his incredulity? His heart fluttered like a wounded bird, and his knees would hardly support his frame. All at once a sound boomed sullenly upon the air, and he gasped as he leaned against

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a tree; again the sound was heard, floating from afar across the night, and reverberating over forest and hill. But it was only the distant clock of the village church striking the hour of midnight, and with a long deep breath he ushered himself upon the sandy common of the church.

The night was now starless, dark and windy. The old church stood in the centre of the waste, its white walls gleaming in the dusky twilight, and the hoary elm trees around it groaning and creaking in the gale. A few ragged clouds swept wildly across the zenith; and occasionally the wind whistled along the common, or moaned sadly in the ruin. He started—a cry, rising on the still air, tingled in every nerve of Steadfast. It was no more the village clock: and his brain began to spin around, until he bethought him it might be the wail of a distant house-dog. Just then—good heavens!—a light was seen to twinkle in the furthest casement of the church, now streaming out brightly amid the gloom, and then flickering fainter and fainter, until it vanished altogether. For a moment Steadfast would have fain persuaded himself it was a star; and he strove to shake off his mysterious dread by lifting up a feeble quaver: but the first note had scarcely risen on the night air, before it was echoed back from the aisles of the church, and a soft, melancholy voice seemed to rise and die away, filling the air with unearthly harmony. The light once more gleamed from the ruined casement, shooting its rays this time boldly across the waste. He would have muttered an adjuration, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth—his knees knocked together—his hair bristled up—and his heart sank within him. He fell at the foot of a tree, for it flashed across his mind, that midnight was the hour for the revels of ghosts, and spirits of another world. His eyes swam dizzily—his head reeled and danced up and down—the church, the light, and the old elms started in a race around and around and around him:—it seemed as if they never would stop. He felt it was all over with him, and he closed his eyes with a shudder.

But he could not long continue so. Suddenly a clap like thunder was heard nigh him, and starting up in dismay, he saw the inside of the old ruin all in a flame. How everything had changed in those five minutes! The sky was pitchy black—the trees were rocking like willow wands about—a tall, blasted pine beside the church glowed like molten silver—and every crack, breach, and window of the ruin blazed with the light of noonday seven times brightened. Strange voices were heard from its midst, and unearthly laughter rung out upon the night. A moment all was still—and a shriek fearful and shrill, curdling the very blood, shot across the silence. Then were heard cries of agony, the wail of women, the deep, awful oaths of men; and blaze!—like a flash of lightning, a troop of horsemen dashed out of the portals of the church, swept rushing by as if on the wings of a whirlwind, and were heard the next minute clashing their arms and shouting wildly as they thundered down the forest. The sounds of their hoofs, and the crashing of the boughs grew fainter and more distant, until they vanished altogether across the far off hills.

It seemed as though this fearful sight, like the first blow of the malefactor on the wheel, had taken away all sense of terror from Steadfast. He felt himself in the power of these spirits, and a desperation came over him. Cold sweats stood upon his brow; but his feet no longer faltered: and driven by an ungovernable impulse, he advanced boldly across the common. As he turned the angle of the ruined grave-yard wall, a train of mourners in white seemed to start up from the ground, bearing slowly in their arms a lifeless corpse, and vanishing like shadows within the blazing portal; while a strain of slow and mournful music rose from the old choir, and a voice was heard as if muttering a litany in some strange tongue. Steadfast slowly crept up to the nighest window, and—heaven save him—looked cautiously within. How it amazed the looker-on to see that though the church was all in a blaze, the inmates suffered no harm, and he himself shivered with cold. Around the ruined altar stood the group of bearers, dressed in the fantastic style of a century before, and singing their melancholy cadence above the pale brow and clasped hands of the murdered bride, who beautiful even in death, reposed like a statue at their feet, with a bunch of withered flowers lying motionless on her bosom. A single dark lock crossed her cheek, waving anon tremulously in the wind. The priest stood at the head of the rude bier, chaunting over her a monotonous requiem. Just then a rustling sound was heard far off across the forest: it drew nigher and nigher, and the shouts and tramp of horsemen rose upon the quiet air: groans, shrieks, and cries for mercy followed; and Steadfast knew it was the wizard horsemen, returning with the murderer, to immolate him beside his innocent victim. He shook in every limb, for crash—crash—crash along they came. The neighboring forest was already tossing and groaning with the commotion. In his anxiety to conceal himself, he moved quickly aside, and stumbling over a stone, uttered an ejaculation. It was his

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Maker's name. Instantly he felt himself lifted from the ground—the rumbling of an earthquake was heard—the old church suddenly grew dark as pitch—the walls rocked, the ground opened, the trees were uprooted, he was hurled like an arrow through the air, and fell stunned and insensible at the margin of the adjacent forest.

When he recovered his senses the sun was already an hour high, and he lay at the foot of the tree where he had stopped when he first beheld the church. A balmy breeze was floating by, the dews glistened in the morning sun, and the birds chirped and carolled in the thickets. He rubbed his eyes—the church was actually unharmed. Not a tree was out of its place, nor a trace of the mysterious commotion left: but the sunbeams played merrily upon the ruined walls; flocks of swallows skimmed twittering about—and an early cow, leisurely switching her tail on the common, turned her face idly toward the intruder's step. Steadfast knew not what to think, and would have set it all down for a dream, had not a stitch in the back and a pain across the head warned him of his fall. But not the simmering of a single blade of grass betokened the fire of the night before. Stiff and lame, the bewildered wight limped home, where a high fever shut him up in his room for a fortnight.

Though even Sven discredited some portions of Steadfast's account, and hinted that the good man had drank too much cider, and let his wits go wool gathering in his sleep, and that even his head-ache and the stiffness in his limbs, were created by sleeping in the open air on a chill autumn night—yet from that hour to his dying day, the whilome sceptic was a firm believer in ghosts, and could never be got to pass the old church, even at broad noon-day, without a shiver. He reformed his life, went out to no more late wassail, and thereafter was a pattern to all idle good-for-naughts and hen-pecked husbands.

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THE AMBITIOUS WIFE.

BY MARY DAVENANT.

"Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition;
By that sin fell the angels." KING HENRY VIII.

MRS. CHARLES CLIFFORD was by no means an angel, but a very pretty, bright looking little woman, who, on the evening my story commences, was sitting in solitude by her own fireside, awaiting the return of her husband from a large dinner party. The apartment she occupied was a neat parlor, through the half open folding door of which you had a glimpse of a lawyer's office beyond, and the light of the solar lamp which fell over the rich waving hair and attractive form of Mrs. Clifford, while it guided her busy fingers in making a garment for one of her little girls, showed that the room was neither spacious nor elegant, though it had that indescribable air which refinement and taste can impart to the most simple furniture. A large arm chair covered with a neat chintz occupied one side of the fire, while on the other was a comfortable sofa of the same material, before which Mrs. Clifford's work-table was placed. A richly quilted silk dressing-gown, and a pair of worked slippers sedulously warming before the glowing fire, showed the thoughtful affection with which the absent husband would be welcomed from the cold and storm without, to the warmth and comforts of his home.

"My dear Charles! how you startled me," exclaimed Mrs. Clifford, as she was aroused from a deep reverie into which she had fallen by feeling a strong hand upon her shoulder, and a stony cold face near her own—"strange that I did not hear you come in."

"You were dreaming, child, with your eyes wide open, for I made noise enough at the door knocking the snow off my feet to awaken the seven sleepers," said her husband.

"Nay, I was not asleep, I was only thinking —but how bitter cold you are."

"Wait until I get my slippers and wrapper on, and then you shall warm my great cold hands with your dear little warm ones. There, that is something like comfort," added Charles, when having placed himself on the sofa, and stretched his long limbs before the fire, he drew his wife closely beside him, saying—"now confess, little wife, what you found so pleasant to think about that you did not hear your own husband come into the room?—at your old work, building castles in the air—eh, Marianne?"

"If I was, Charles, I am sure it is an innocent amusement when one is dull and solitary. But tell me about your dinner party. You will grant now that I did not exaggerate when I told you of all Selina Wentworth's splendor."

"Splendor indeed!—why I could hardly trust to my senses that it was my shabby old school fellow, Phil Wentworth, that I saw at the head of that sumptuous table—fortune plays strange freaks sometimes."

"Strange enough," sighed Mrs. Clifford, and she sighed again when her husband had finished his description of the handsome entertainment given by his old companion to some highly distinguished and fashionable guests.

"Why do you sigh, Marianne?" asked Charles, "I hope you are not envious of Selina's grandeur. It is a pity," he added laughing, "that Phil did not happen to fancy you instead of your friend. You would really have enjoyed having all that finery about you; but Selina does not appear to care for it all."

"Now, Charles, you are too provoking!" said Mrs. Clifford, her dark eyes flashing as she raised her head proudly from her husband's shoulder. "You know that I never could endure Philip Wentworth, and that it is the knowledge that he, upstart as he is, has risen above you, that galls me as it does. As to Selina she may *seem* to care nothing for style and fashion, as she has always seemed to care least about what her heart is most set upon—but the quiet triumph that lurked in her eye as she took me all through her new house, which heaven knows I did not want to see, showed plainly enough what she was thinking of."

"And what was that?" asked Charles.

"Of how much she had risen above me, to be sure—Selina always envied me from my very childhood."

"And now you are returning the compliment —all very fair, my dear," said Charles laughing.

"You may laugh as much as you please, Charles, but you cannot alter facts. I certainly made a far better match than Selina—the whole town cried out at hers—and now look at her and at me."

"You are very much to be pitied, Marianne."

"Indeed I sometimes think that I am, living as I do in this little cramped up house without a single modern improvement or convenience. If you only could be persuaded, Charles, to move into a better house, where I could have two parlors and you two offices, we should be far more comfortable."

"Comfortable," said Charles, as he cast his eyes round the room—"who could wish for greater comfort than this? This little parlor is to me a Paradise—it seemed so to you too, Marianne, when I brought you here on our wedding day, and surely the many happy hours

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we have passed here since should have endeared it to us both yet more strongly."

"Ah, but we were poor then, Charles, and thankful to get any home to call our own. Now we are far better off. Your practise is increasing, and it would increase still more if you were to make an appearance better suited to your position in life. Every one says that a lawyer who wishes to rise should go into the world and entertain company. I ask you seriously, how is that possible in such a house as this?"

"We can and do see our friends constantly—there is room enough for them."

"Yes, but strangers—people of importance, who might increase your business connexions and help you to rise in your profession," said Marianne.

"Bah—nonsense," replied her husband, "if I rise it must be by my own inherent strength, not by such miserable devices as these. Do you think any one would be the more willing to trust their money in my hands, from seeing me spend more than I can afford? As it is, I support my family, lay up something at the end of the year for a rainy day, and always have a trifle for a friend in distress. How could I do this were my expenses three times as great?"

"By your increased practise," persisted Marianne. "There is young Kinsman—since he has been in that handsome house they say he has had an immense accession of business. For my sake, Charles—for the sake of your children, do try the experiment. It is easy to retrench if we do not find it answer. You do not know, you cannot conceive how much my comfort and happiness depend upon it."

Charles Clifford wavered. Much that was said by his wife was perfectly true. His house was small and inconvenient; often of late he had felt the want of another office; it was an advantage to a man to increase his connexions and to show that he had risen in his profession—all this he could not gainsay. The wife saw her advantage, and pushed it to the uttermost, and before retiring to rest that night, Charles, who laugh though he might at his wife's folly, had not been a little struck by the great social elevation achieved by his parvenue school fellow Mr. Wentworth, and whose imagination was captivated by the idea of his own pretty wife presiding over an establishment of equal elegance, promised her that he would at least think seriously upon the subject.

Seldom, perhaps, had greater domestic happiness been enjoyed by any than had fallen to the lot of Charles Clifford before the demon of worldly ambition had taken possession of his wife's spirit. He had married young and from sincere affection. The very small portion brought him by his wife, the orphan daughter of a gentleman of family though not of fortune, had been sufficient to furnish their simple establishment, and to keep them from the all absorbing anxieties that necessarily attend the young adventurer into the arena of professional life. Charles was handsome, intelligent, industrious, and frugal; his principles and temper were excellent; in every way he deserved success, and he did succeed slowly but surely.

After a few years, the death of his father, a lawyer of some eminence, threw into his hands a large amount of unfinished business, which he completed so entirely to the satisfaction of those concerned that his reputation from that time was considered as established. But the death of his parent brought no further accession to his fortune. A mother and two sisters were to be provided for, and to them was left the whole of Mr. Clifford's property—which, owing to some unfortunate investments, was barely enough to maintain them in the style to which they were accustomed—until the death of the former, or the marriages of the latter, should call for an equal division of the estate.

Mrs. Clifford, the elder, was, however, a hale, healthy woman; and of the marriage of the sisters there seemed no prospect, as both were now turned of thirty, and had always been singularly indifferent to what by many is considered the great object of woman's existence.

Charles had acquiesced entirely in this disposition of his father's property, and received with thankfulness the valuable library, which together with a small legacy, was all which had been bequeathed him. Until now Marianne had fully agreed with him. She had been so happy in her quiet home, absorbed in affectionate cares for her husband and the three sweet children who had filled her house and her heart with joy, that no room had been left for envious repinings, until the removal of one whose portion in life she had hitherto considered far inferior to her own, into a position much more brilliant, had called into action the latent evil of her nature.

It is true that Marianne Clifford had from her childhood been accustomed to move amongst those far her superiors in wealth, but it was among such as appeared to have an inherent right to it. There had been no evident transitions from a humble to an exalted position as was now the case; and it was not until accompanying Selina Wentworth through the splendid establishment that owned her for its mistress—she whom Marianne had always pitied as "poor Selina," and who on her marriage with one far her inferior in condition, had not even been able

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to go to house-keeping—that she felt the evil spirit knocking hard for entrance to her door.

Instead of struggling against the intruder, Marianne gave him a ready entrance, garnished the abode for his reception, cherished him, dwelt upon his suggestions, until they become her thought by day and her dream by night, and finally led her husband under the same malignant influence.

From the night we have spoken of, when a long evening of solitary reverie upon the suggestions of the tempter had given Marianne unwonted zeal and success in pleading the cause she had at heart, it was astonishing to observe how greatly a perception of the inconveniences of their house increased upon both the husband and the wife. Charles found he was in the most positive need of two offices; Marianne that it was impossible to live without two parlors—a dining-room was indispensable, and their chambers were so distressingly small. A thousand absolutely necessary things that had never before been thought of, were now constantly missed and coveted. In short, before a month was out, Charles announced to his mother and sisters that his house was perfectly uninhabitable, and that while he was about moving he thought he would purchase a good house, as it was all important for a lawyer to be permanently settled.

"Have you a house in view?" asked his mother.

"Why not exactly—Anson's would suit us admirably, but he asks too much for it."

"Anson's!" exclaimed both mother and sisters in amazement, and the former added—"why, Charles, can you afford to live in a house like that?"

"As to living," replied the son, "one can live as economically in a large house as in a small one. We do not intend to alter our style of living in the least, except perhaps in giving a dinner now and then, which I never could do with any comfort in the old rat hole I am in now."

"But the furniture, Charles," said one of his sisters, "it would take a little fortune to furnish that house suitably."

"Not at all—we must get new carpets, which we want at any rate, and perhaps a sofa and some tables and chairs—five or six hundred dollars will do that, and that I can very well afford—but I am not thinking of Anson's, I tell you, the price is too high."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mrs. Clifford. "I trust that both Marianne and yourself have too much sense to enter upon the dangerous experiment of living beyond your means."

"Never fear for me, mother," said the son.

But Mrs. Clifford knew human nature too well not to have fears. She saw that Charles had set his heart upon the elegant establishment of Mr. Anson, and when a few weeks afterward he told her that after looking at a dozen others he found none that suited him so well, and had, therefore, concluded on the purchase, she only sighed and said nothing.

"Do not sigh, mother," said Charles, "it is a perfectly safe investment, and the terms are made very easy to me. I have paid down but three thousand dollars, and I have saved more than that. I must only work the harder to pay the rest. It is a good thing for a young man to have such an object in view." Mrs. Clifford made no reply.

Mr. Anson's house was about three times too large for the family who were now to occupy it. There were two fine offices, two spacious parlors, a dining-room, and more than a dozen chambers. Part of the latter were to be left vacant, and while the workmen were busy putting the house into complete order, Mr. Clifford and his wife occupied every moment the former could spare from his business in looking about and deciding upon the furnishing of the rest.

At first nothing but what was absolutely necessary was to be purchased. They would get but few things, but those very handsome, and then go on by degrees as they could afford it. Both had a secret consciousness they were doing an imprudent thing, but they were resolved to do it in the most prudent possible manner. What was, therefore, the consternation of both, when after ranging far and wide through the most celebrated marts of the luxuries they were in quest of, to find their five or six hundred dollars had swelled to a thousand, and this did not include the half of what they *now* discovered they needed.

"You must give up your Saxony carpets, Marianne, and get Brussels as we at first intended, and substitute mahogany and haircloth for your rose-wood and satin furniture," said Charles.

"It would be a thousand pities to do so," replied his wife. "Recollect, Charles, we are to be fixed there for the rest of our lives, and Saxony carpets will wear as long again as Brussels. Then how would hair furniture look with those expensive chandeliers and gilt mouldings?"

"The chandeliers did not cost me a cent you know, Marianne—Anson threw them into the bargain to induce me to take the house, as we had no gas fixtures of our own."

"True, but as they are there, we must have other things to suit them," said Marianne.

"Yes, if we can pay for them."

"Oh, we need not pay for them until the end

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of the year, you are sure to be able to afford it then."

"I am sure of no such thing, Marianne, and I will not begin by plunging myself so deeply into debt—so you must hit upon some other plan."

"If aunt Harris would only die and leave me the legacy she has always promised me, we might get all we want—the poor old soul has but little enjoyment of her life at any rate."

"The 'poor old soul' will hardly die to please you, Marianne."

"Your mother might help us if she would. For my part I think your father's will was a most unfair one. If he had left you an equal share of his property, as he ought to have done, we would be perfectly comfortable. There is no chance now of our ever getting it—your mother is as likely to live as ourselves, and the girls will never marry—it almost looks as if they remained single to spite us."

"Stop, Marianne," said her husband, with unwonted sternness—"will you grudge to your aunt and my mother their existence, and to my sisters their means of existence for the sake of fine carpets and chairs? We were comfortable and happy too before these ambitious notions entered our brains—God grant we may be equally so after it," and Charles left the room, shutting his office door behind him in a way that showed him to be really angry.

His wife stood for a moment completely abashed at this first symptom of the deterioration of her moral sense. But she did not alter her conduct in the least, and Charles, whose weakness lay in his strong affection, was easily persuaded to yield to all her wishes. The expensive furniture was bought to be paid for when they could afford it, and they soon took possession of their handsome house.

It is to be questioned whether pleasure or pain most preponderated, when, after all was arranged, Mrs. Clifford looked round her spacious rooms, and contrasted the few, though elegant articles they contained, with the rich profusion of costly furniture that crowded the parlors of Mrs. Wentworth.

"It seemed," as she observed to her husband, "as if after all the expense they had gone to, they had done nothing—positively nothing. The walls were so bare without either mirrors or curtains, and the sofas and chairs and tables seemed as though they had quarrelled, they stood so far apart," and Marianne had just resolved to put all that had originally been intended for both rooms into one, and to shut up the other until they grew richer; when the much desired death of her aunt put her in possession of a legacy of five thousand dollars.

Here was cause for thankfulness! No tear of genuine sorrow was shed over the inanimate remains of one who from her earliest childhood until now had lavished kindness and affection upon her orphan niece. The past was all forgotten in eagerness to avail herself of the present good.

Mrs. Clifford could now outshine Mrs. Wentworth, not only in the size of her apartments, but in the perfection of their appointments; and though the legacy she expected from her aunt had always been intended to be invested for a future provision for her little girls, she immediately devoted it to that desirable object.

Aunt Harris' well saved thousands were soon converted into mirrors, curtains, China, plate and furniture of the most costly description. Both Mr. and Mrs. Clifford were persons of real taste. There was none of the vulgar show and gaudy ornament so grating to the eye of taste in Mrs. Wentworth's parvenue abode. All was rich and massive in material, and beautiful in form, and when Mrs. Clifford, as soon as her mourning was over, favored a select and highly exclusive circle of the fashionable world with a sumptuous entertainment, all was pronounced by these leaders of the ton to be "in perfect keeping—just what it ought to be."

"Has Mr. Clifford a large private fortune?" said a distinguished stranger who was present to Mrs. Wentworth. "I knew his father well, but was not aware he had left a large property."

"Oh, dear, no," simpered Mrs. Wentworth, "he left very little, just enough for his widow to live upon. Mr. Charles Clifford has made his own fortune."

"Made a fortune at the bar already!" said Mr. Y——. "He has been singularly successful—he does not look more than thirty, and this is the establishment of a millionaire. Perhaps his wife was wealthy—she certainly looks like one used to move in an atmosphere of luxury."

"Oh, dear, no," reiterated Selina, "she had little or nothing, nor he either, I believe, if the truth was told. They lived for years in a little bit of a house in —— street, and it is not more than a year since they moved here and set out so grandly. He has a good practice to be sure, but Mr. Wentworth says it is 'up like a rocket and down like a stick.'"

"I trust not," said Mr. Y—— with feeling, as he turned from his uncongenial companion to contemplate the fine countenance and noble bearing of Charles and the elegant figure of his wife, so well suited to the scene over which they were presiding. "If ever truth and honor dwelt in a human face I see them there," thought Mr. Y——, as he turned from the one and bent his

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scrutinizing gaze upon the other. "Poor young people! like too many in our prosperous country, they are beginning at the wrong end—but I see the wife is at the bottom of it all."

At first to all outward seeming Charles Clifford's experiment succeeded well. His business increased, his influence extended, his society was courted, and his success was wondered at. True, he grew care-worn and anxious, and soon lost the clear, calm, open brow that looked as though it could have defied the storms of fate; but this was ascribed by his wife and others to the pressure of business, to which he devoted himself with such unremitting assiduity. He had now no leisure, or what is worse, no inclination for the simple home relaxations once so refreshing to his wearied spirit. Thanks to his cheerless furnace, there was now no bright fireside by which to linger, and thanks to the vortex of gaiety into which she soon was plunged, no fond wife ever beside it to beguile him into a forgetfulness of his many anxieties.

As it often happens, the much coveted legacy from her aunt had proved anything but a blessing to Marianne Clifford. It had supplied her at a most critical moment in her career with the means of gratifying a feeling degrading to her nature—that of vying with another in show—and by accustoming her for the time to a profuse expenditure, and surrounding her with the appearance of wealth, had led her to forget her own real position, as the wife of a man struggling for a maintenance, even more entirely than any one about her.

The unhappy effects of this were soon apparent. Habits of self-indulgence took the place of the wholesome self-denial of her earlier life; these like the daughters of the horse-leech were ever crying, "give, give" to the harrassed husband; mutual heart-burnings were the result; until the domestic intercourse once so pure a source of pleasure to both, was now little sought after or cared for by either. With all her struggles to outshine her more wealthy neighbors, Mrs. Clifford was doomed to various mortifications, often, it is true, the result of her own morbid sensitiveness on the subject; this embittered the enjoyment of her triumphs, and made her, with every means of happiness within her reach, an irritable, discontented woman.

"I believe from my soul a curse rests upon this house," said Charles, one morning (some seven years from the commencement of our story) after looking despairingly over a pile of household bills. "I have scarcely had a happy day since I entered it. Every year I am plunging more and more deeply in debt. I feel my health breaking, my wife is unhappy, and my children are getting reared in habits of self-indulgence, which will unfit them sadly for the poverty which must be their portion—something must be done, and that speedily."

After walking for some time up and down the room, Charles hastened to his wife's chamber, whom he found stretched languidly on a sofa, absorbed apparently in painful reflections. He drew a chair beside her in silence, and after a few moments said—

"Have you thought, Marianne, of what I said to you last evening?"

"Indeed I have thought of but little else, Charles—such confidences as that are sure to make an impression."

"I want them to make an impression, Marianne. The time has come that I have so long been anticipating—we must retrench our expenses."

"But I don't know how we can retrench them. I am sure I do not buy a thing I can possibly do without, or keep a servant more than is absolutely necessary. I do not see why you ask *me* to retrench—but that is always the way with men—we poor women must make all the sacrifices. I gave up my trip to Saratoga to please you, and have suffered for it ever since."

"Once you did not think a trip to Saratoga one of the necessaries of life—nor six servants, nor a thousand other things I could name—and heaven knows both you and I were happier then than we have been since! But that is nothing to the purpose—retrench we must. I neither can nor will live any longer at the rate we have done. Six months interest is now due on the mortgage upon this house—I have not the money to pay it, and a pile of household bills below will take every cent I have in bank. The constant anxiety I suffer about money matters is killing me by inches, and unfitting me for business—if I were to die to-morrow my children would be beggars—I have determined to sell this house and go into a small one."

"Sell this house!" screamed his wife, starting from her sofa. "Anything but that, Charles! —what would the world say?—you would be ruined utterly by such a step—we can economize in a thousand other ways—take the children from school—dismiss our man servant—anything rather than make such a confession of poverty"—and Mrs. Clifford wrung her hands and burst into an agony of tears.

Her husband was much moved. "My poor Marianne!" he said—"and are you indeed so wedded to the trappings that surround you that the well being of your husband and your children are nothing when weighed against them?"

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"It is for your sake and theirs that I oppose so rash a step. You will lose station, business, everything—can you not borrow the paltry sum you stand in need of?"

"And next year borrow more—as I have been doing for years past?"

"But there must be ways and means. Where is the money you recovered for Linnard?"

"In bank, where it ought to be, awaiting his return from India."

"But he will not return for six months at least—why not use it until then?"

"Marianne do you know what you are doing?—asking me to violate my professional honor?"

"Other men are not so scrupulous."

"Great God!" said Charles, starting from his seat—"and has it come to this?—does the wife of my bosom tempt me to stain my time honored name, and leave a heritage of infamy to my children? No, Marianne—after this, we take no further counsel together. I will still hold fast to my integrity."

In a few days the house was advertised for sale, and Mrs. Clifford took to her bed and would neither see nor speak to her unhappy husband. She was aroused from it, however, by an unexpected stroke. Her son—her only son—a lovely boy of ten years of age, was seized with a sudden illness, which bore him rapidly to the grave, where he had scarcely been laid when the same malady attacked his broken-hearted father.

Distressed, helpless, hopeless, Mrs. Clifford sat in mute despair beside her husband's bed. His vacant eye did not recognize her, while his wandering tongue betrayed how deeply she had wounded the spirit now apparently forsaking its earthly tenement. His pathetic calls upon the wife whom he fancied had deserted him in his hour of need—his tender appeals to their earlier, happier days—his dread of some mighty woe that threatened to overwhelm him—all pierced like a two-edged sword upon the conscience of the stricken listener, and in her despair she cried to the heaven that seemed to have forsaken her for "mercy!—mercy!"

And heaven was merciful to the repentant wife, to whom the nothingness of all she had been struggling to attain was now fully revealed. Her husband was restored to her prayers, and with a renewed heart and a thankful spirit Marianne Clifford prepared to meet the reverse of fortune her own selfish ambition had brought.

A small but comfortable residence was soon ready to receive them, to which not one article of their splendid furniture was suffered to be removed. The sale of this, together with the house he so long had called his, enabled Mr. Clifford to discharge the debts that had so burthened him, and with a lightened heart and an unsullied conscience he was soon absorbed in professional labors.

Of course "the world," whose favor and applause Mr. and Mrs. Clifford had endeavored to purchase at so costly a price, was by no means surprised at this denouement. All were eager to prove their own sagacity by declaring they had always forseen how it would end—every one "could see that the Cliffords were living too fast." Some, it is true, were kind enough to regret Mrs. Clifford's delightful parties, and her husband's capital dinners, but one and all joined in the full chorus of blame that resounded from all sides. Mrs. Wentworth repeated with triumph her husband's prophecy of "up like a rocket and down like a stick," which he, poor man, did not seem to enjoy with his former relish.

The reason was soon too apparent. Mr. Wentworth made a most dishonorable failure. Capital he had never possessed, both credit and character now were gone, and he, therefore, thought the best thing to be done was to go after them, no one knew whither—leaving his wife to stem alone the torrent of woe that swept upon her and her helpless family.

"Thank God, Marianne, we stopped when we did," said Charles Clifford, as he joined his wife and daughters on the evening after these distressing events had transpired. "A few years more of the miserable degradation of *acting the rich man* might have blunted my moral sense as it has done poor Wentworth's. No man's principles are safe when he gives himself up to the guidance of a false ambition."

"True," sighed Mrs. Clifford—"nor woman's either."

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THE HONEYSUCKLE PORCH.

BY EMILY H. MAY.

"WHAT a beautiful creature," exclaimed Fred Hanson to his fellow traveller, as they entered the village street of ——.

"Where?"

"In yonder honeysuckle porch—in that little cottage. Ah! she sees we are talking of her and is retiring within doors."

"Take care that Miss McIlvaine does not hear your eulogiums on this rustic beauty, or she will be jealous of you."

"Pshaw!" said our hero, turning away as if the subject annoyed him.

Young Hanson had been engaged from childhood to the daughter and sole heiress of the rich Mr. McIlvaine, of ——. The match was settled by the parents, when the objects of it were yet children; and Fred Hanson, having now grown to manhood, was on his journey to woo and wed, in due form, his plighted mistress. The task, however, was not altogether to his taste; for he disliked having his freedom of choice controlled; and he would probably have rebelled altogether, had it not been for the large fortune of the bride, a prize which he was already wordly enough to desire.

"It will be terribly dull, Charley," he said to his most intimate friend, "as this formal courting always is. I know Miss McIlvaine is pretty, and if they had only let me alone I might have fallen in love with her; but I confess that now, the utmost I can do will be to adore her *a la mode*—that is, be fashionably indifferent to my rich wife. We shall no doubt each have a carriage; she will go to balls, and I to the club. Faith! won't we be happy. You positively must come along with me, or I shall die of ennui during the six weeks appointed for the love-making."

On these terms his friend had accompanied our hero down to ——. They found Miss McIlvaine even prettier than she had been represented. She met her lover with a very becoming blush, but did not the less neglect her duty of entertaining him and his friend. She had been fashionably educated, and was a skilful musician, so that the evening passed agreeably: and the young men retired very well pleased with their fair hostess.

The next day, however, after an hour spent in the drawing-room, where Miss McIlvaine appeared in the prettiest of morning dresses, our hero rose on pretence of seeing the village. When the two young men had left the house, he said to his companion.

"And what do you think of Miss McIlvaine?"

"She is a charming girl," was the reply. "So

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lady-like, so distinguished in her style of dress, so accomplished."

"So cold, so formal, so machine-like," I say, retorted our hero.

"Perverse man," cried his friend. "Can't you see she is just what the wife of a man of fashion ought to be? What you call formality is dignity, your coldness is a proper reserve, and as for being a machine, all properly educated young ladies are more or less so."

"Well, then, I don't believe in that sort of education. Give me a woman who is not afraid to show the natural impulses of her heart; and not one whose soul has been cramped from childhood by a false system of instruction. For my part, I am going to get introduced to that pretty little girl I saw yesterday: she has a face full of sentiment."

"You are too hasty in forming your conclusions."

"And I'll bet my analysis of Miss McIlvaine's character is the correct one."

The two friends parted, our hero continuing his walk down the street, and his friend stopping at the Post-Office to write a letter. They did not rejoin each other until the dinner hour. The evening passed like the former one. In the morning the two friends again walked out together.

"I am going to fish," said our hero, "there are some fine trout in the stream. Will you take a rod too?"

"No, I never fish!" said his friend. "I will saunter down to the hotel and see if I can pick up any news."

A week passed in this manner, the two friends scarcely ever passing a morning together. At the end of that time our hero was asked by his friend if he had made the acquaintance of the "rural beauty at the honeysuckle cottage," little suspecting that the answer would be, as it proved, in the affirmative.

"Indeed, and do you admire her mind as much as her face? Pray, what did she talk about?—pigs, cows, the price of cheese, and the secret of making good homespun, I suppose."

"I have spent every morning there, under one pretext or another. She has a better stored mind than Miss McIlvaine: the latter has skimmed over the most studies, but the former understands thoroughly everything she has taken up. You should hear her French along side of Miss McIlvaine's."

"Her French—what! French in a cottage. Think of her in the kitchen, her arms covered with meal to the elbows, asking a servant for the dredging box in French. It is too good!"

Our hero turned away with a scornful look, and the conversation ceased for the present. The fact was, Hanson was in love, really, deeply in love, and for the first time in his life. Accident had favored his acquaintance with Rose Murray; for on the very first morning after his arrival, he had met her in his walk and had an opportunity of assisting her over a brook swollen by the late rains. This was sufficient for a man of our hero's tact and easy manners: he accompanied her home; and the next day called again. He found her very intelligent and particularly well read in poetry. A new volume which he had brought down with him, and which he insisted on lending her, gave him an excuse for calling a third time; and after that it seemed a matter of course to spend his mornings at the cottage. At the end of the second week he was irrevocably in love; for Rose was just the character to fascinate him, being all naturalness, as her rival was all artificiality.

Yet there was, during all this time, a fierce struggle going on in our hero's mind. He had been brought up to do nothing, in expectation of an ample fortune: and in the world of ton where he lived had imbibed an exaggerated notion of the importance of wealth. But his own fortune was inconsiderable, and if he married any other than an heiress, he would have to rely on his own labor for support. Love at last triumphed, however; and he laid his heart at the feet of Rose. But how was he startled to meet a refusal! She did not indeed deny an affection for him, but, as she now learned for the first time, his situation, her reply was,

"Your family wish you to wed Miss McIlvaine. Forget me then, for I will never marry where my alliance is disdained."

This proud reply, while it increased his respect and love for Rose, drove him to despair, the more as he found it impossible to shake her purpose. He went back to the hall gloomy and dejected. But when he got there, he found everything in confusion; and the master of the house raging for fleet horses. Miss McIlvaine had eloped with our hero's friend!

This information filled our hero with joy.

"Rose can now be mine; for I shall have no difficulty in obtaining the consent of my family. I little fancied Charley was cutting me out: however, I am so happy now that I can forgive the treachery of my friend."

Rose and our hero *were* married, and her new relatives were charmed with her. Since then years have passed, and she still continues to win love and admiration everywhere. Even in the world of ton, the parties of the *cidevant* Miss McIlvaine are considered less *recherche* than those of our sweet Rose.

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THE BARON'S DAUGHTER;: OR, MAY-DAY IN THE OLDEN TIME.
BY J. H. DANA.
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THE BARON'S DAUGHTER.

Engraved for the Lady's National Magazine by J D. Gross

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THE BARON'S DAUGHTER;

OR, MAY-DAY IN THE OLDEN TIME.

BY J. H. DANA.

"Now Grace, sweet Grace, do lay aside your viol and grant my request."

The speaker was in the bloom of youth and beauty, richly attired, and with that air of easy dignity which betokened high birth. She stood on the battlements of one of those massive castles which rose over all England during the reign of Stephen, and a few of which yet remain in our mother country to attest the stormy character of that age.

The companion whom she addressed sat at her feet, and was playing a troubadour's lay on the small viol then in fashion. She was somewhat older than the speaker: and less richly dressed. Grace was a cousin of the baron's daughter, and her adviser and companion.

"And what may the request be?" said Grace, looking up.

"Oh! you must promise to grant it before I tell you."

"Nay! that I can scarcely do. What would your father say if he knew I fulfilled my charge so carelessly?"

"Well, I will tell you. But you must positively consent," said Maud, stooping and kissing her friend's cheek caressingly. "I wish then to go down to the green and see the villagers at their sport, for it is as sweet a May-day as I ever saw, and we have been cooped up here all winter."

Grace looked forth from the castle wall when her companion alluded to the sports of the villagers and heaved a sigh. It was indeed a morning to make the two young girls wish for an hour's liberty. The season was an advanced one, and already the earlier trees were in leaf, while myriads of flowers blushed in wood and meadow, filling the air with fragrance. The dew spangled in the grass; the birds sang from the spray; the waters danced and sparkled in the sunshine; and a soft breeze kissing the brows of the maidens, tossed their curls and gave a refreshing tone to their spirits as well as a rosier hue to their cheeks. No wonder that Grace sighed as she answered.

"Indeed, Maud, I should like to tread the greensward once more myself, but you know the promise I gave your father, not to leave the castle walls until his return from Normandy."

"Ah! but he did not expect to be gone so long—he never dreamed of imprisoning us here for four long months."

"But I should never forgive myself if we went abroad and any accident happened. Your father told me I must supply the place of a mother to you—you know, Maud, I am nearly ten years the elder, and ought to be discreet accordingly.

"Yet this once—only this once," pleaded Maud. "Surely none of the freebooters will be abroad on May-day. Besides the village is almost in sight from the castle."

Grace looked wistfully at the smiling landscape and was half persuaded. Yet she shook her head. The period was indeed one of unusual danger; for it was during the imprisonment of Richard of the Lion Heart in Germany; a period when lawlesness reigned supreme, and when the minions of the usurper John daily committed the greatest atrocities. And as the Baron De la Spencer adhered to the rightful king, there was little safety for his household except behind the stone walls of his castle. Hence, on departing on a secret mission to the continent, relative to the ransom of his monarch, he had left his daughter in charge of the more prudent Grace, exhorting her, on no account, to leave the castle until his return.

But Maud had set her heart on witnessing the sports of the day, and she now began to ply her cousin with a thousand arguments, until at last Grace consented, persuading herself that there could be no harm in transgressing the injunction for a single morning. But to ensure safety to their excursion, she ordered a part of the garrison to attend them, leaving behind only just sufficient to man the walls.

Maud and Grace, therefore, mounted their palfreys, and attended by a dozen men-at-arms, left

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the castle-gate. Trotting down a gentle slope, they turned an angle of the wood, and soon reached the village green. Here they were received with loud shouts of welcome, but Maud smilingly desired that the sports might not be interrupted, and with redoubled glee the merry revellers resumed their games. Meanwhile she and Grace looked on.

And a jocund spectacle it was. High in the centre of the green, the May-pole reared its head, decorated with innumerable wreaths, while a gay pennon floated from its top. Not far from this was a bower made of the green branches of trees interlaced, in which on a rude floral seat was the village belle, now queen of May. Three or four of the rude musicians of the common people of the period kept time together playing while the villagers danced. Here a dragon, made of coarse painted cloth stretched on hoops, moved about, occasionally vomiting fire. A huge hobby horse near by delighted the spectators with his pranks. All was mirth and jollity!

Maud was in the mood to enjoy the scene, and with Grace at her elbow kept remarking on the different groups. But she was principally attracted by a gallant in the dress of a forester, whose dashing air carried everything before it with the village girls. He and the queen of May had been for some time engaged in a very obvious flirtation, apparently much to the chagrin of a more awkward yeoman who eyed the couple with angry glances. Maud knew the latter to be a man of substance and worth, but the forester was totally unknown to her, though now and then she fancied she had somewhere seen a face like his. He appeared too as if desirous of catching her eye, at least so Maud thought, as she could not help following his fine shape with her eyes. Twice their glances met, and Maud was conscious of blushing, though why she should do so for a yeoman she could not tell.

In the course of her observations she noticed that there was a larger number of men present than was usual, and that quite one half of their faces were strange to her. She mentioned this fact to Grace.

"Indeed I now perceive it too," said her cousin, with symptoms of alarm. "There is something strange in this, and it may be peril. Dear Maud, had we not better return?"

"Oh! not yet—not yet," cried the gay and reckless Maud. "Sure there can be no danger while we are backed by these stout men-at-arms. Wait a little while, for there will be fun yet from Master Greenjacket's flirtation with our pretty queen of May—I see already that her old lover is itching for a bout at single-stick."

"He might chance to get the worst of it," said the old seneschal, who at once squired the ladies and commanded the men-at-arms.

"Ah! then you know this forester. He is a handsome fellow at any rate," said Maud.

"No, I do not know him," said the veteran. "But he looks as supple as a young sapling, and—my word on it!—could knock dull Master Hodge head over heels before he knew it."

"Who can he be?" said Grace. "Not an outlaw, I hope; for if so we had better return at once."

"As you say, my lady," replied the old man deferentially; "but, for my part, I don't look on these outlaws as enemies: they are true and good Englishmen, and only foes to knavish priests and hungry Normans. You, my lady, who come of Saxon blood, ought never to fear the friends of the people."

"Nor do I," said Maud. "We will stay."

The sport now went on with increased activity, and for some time Maud and Grace did nothing but laugh at the antics of the hobby-horse and the capers of the dragon. Suddenly, however, a cry of alarm arose, and instantaneously was heard the clatter of approaching horsemen. By the time Maud could look around, a body of men-at-arms, not less than fifty in number, had galloped on the lawn, of which they took possession, the affrighted villagers flying in every direction.

The old seneschal immediately formed his little troop around their mistress, for he recognized in the leader of the intruders, the Lord Mountjoy, a hereditary foe of the baron, a neighboring noble of the worst character, and a jealous partizan of Prince John. The veteran hoped to have escaped unobserved in the confusion, but the flutter of the women's garments unfortunately attracted the attention of the lawless noble.

"Ha! what have we yonder?" he exclaimed. "By St. Jude, those are ladies, and guarded by de Spencer's men-at-arms. They must be the pretty doves he has kept cooped in his infernal strong-hold during his absence. The saints be praised that such rare creatures are thrown in our path to-day—for, by our halidome, we might have wished for them long enough ere we could have rifled them from their nests. Wilfred, you ride toward the wood-road and cut off their retreat. We will keep the highway. A rare banquet we shall have to-night with these pretty dames for company."

With that he laughed a coarse laugh which reached even the ears of Maud, and made her tremble with apprehension, for by this time she had detected the cognizance of her father's foe.

"Close up—close up," cried the old seneschal, as he saw the hostile movements of the enemy.

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"We must die around our mistress if they attack us. But first let me speak them fair."

The veteran accordingly rode forward and attempted to parley with the enemy; but he was laughed to scorn when he asked a free passage for his noble mistress.

"Nay, nay, old fellow, not so fast," cried Mountjoy. "The Lady Maud hath a fine estate and will match well with mine own noble self. Fortune hath placed her in my hands and I shall not neglect the chance, you may be sure."

"Then over our dead bodies only shall you take her," cried the seneschal, falling back to his men.

"Be it so," said the noble.

Meantime the villagers had totally disappeared, only a few of the men lingering behind. Among these was the forester, who, during the last few minutes, had been drawing nearer to Maud. He did not, however, seem to purpose engaging in the strife, but sauntered carelessly along as if only desirous of getting a suitable position to observe the struggle. Once or twice he whistled in an idle way, and looked indifferently around. Maud, who even in her terror, was still pursued by his image, at first hoped he was coming to their aid; but in this she was sadly disappointed, for when he had approached within twenty yards, he stopped at the door of a cottage, where he stood idly leaning against the door post.

The lawless noble had now put his men in motion, and at this instant they came on at a gallop with lances levelled. The little band around Maud met the shock bravely, but several of them were unhorsed. The seneschal, however, still kept his saddle, and drawing his sword, while he shouted to encourage his men, he placed himself anew in front of Maud, like a faithful watch-dog defending his charge.

But his heroic devotion was in vain. With one blow of his huge battle axe, Mountjoy hurled the old man to the earth, and continuing his rapid career reached the side of the now defenceless Maud. With a shriek, the hapless maiden covered her face from his hated sight; while Grace, as if her feeble arms could have protected her cousin, threw herself between Maud and her assailant.

In this extremity aid came from a quarter whence it had ceased to be expected. During the events we have described, the forester had gazed carelessly on the conflict, occasionally, however, looking toward the wood; but when he saw Mountjoy bear down the old seneschal, he hastily stepped into the cottage and immediately re-appeared with a bow and cloth yard shaft. It was the work of a moment to fit the latter to the string; and, quick as thought, the arrow sped on its mission. Right through the bars of Mountjoy's helmet the shaft found its way, penetrating the eye and thence entering the brain: and with a dull groan, the rude assailant fell backward from the saddle and tumbled headlong to the earth. He had not even time to insult Maud by a touch.

At the same instant a cheer was heard from the wood, and thirty bold archers stepped forth, each man armed with a bow, and having several arrows stuck in his belt. At their head was a tall, stalwart man, whose eagle's plume and silver bugle, to say nothing of his bearing, betrayed one used to command. He waved his hand, and thirty arrows were promptly fitted to the string. He gave the signal, and each cloth yard shaft sped on its fatal errand. Half of the ravishers fell to the ground, and the rest took to flight, though even before that arrowy hail rained on them, they had turned their horses' heads in fear. As the discomfited villains galloped away, the bold foresters gave three hearty cheers.

And now the forester, whose shaft had sent Mountjoy to his last account, hurried up to the rescued ladies, where the hero with the eagle plume himself appeared the moment after. In his way he raised the old seneschal who had been only stunned, and was now coming to himself.

Maud, as well as Grace, was not without resolution; and instead of swooning as many a modern damsel would have done, collected her spirits and turned to thank her deliverers. The young forester had now removed his cap, and as she gazed on his features, Maud exclaimed—

"What! Henry Neville here! Or am I dreaming?"

"Not dreaming, lady fair," he exclaimed on bended knee. "It is indeed your unfortunate lover, happy for once, however, since he has rendered you some slight service."

"And this," she said, turning to the captain of the foresters—"this is——"

"Robin Hood!" exclaimed that renowned champion, lifting his cap. "The friend of all honest nobles like the good Lord Spencer, and especially of beauty in distress."

This happy denouement was rendered even more felicitous by the information now imparted to Maud that her faithful band had suffered comparatively little, though several were bruised and wounded, the short period during which the conflict lasted having prevented more serious hurts. The principal execution had been done on the enemy, and by Robin Hood's archers. In a few minutes the villagers returned to the green.

But how came a lover of Maud in the disguise of a forester, we hear the reader ask. Young

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Neville had been a page formerly in Lord Spencer's household, and while there had imbibed a secret affection for Maud. But as he was only of a simple knight's degree, he dared not aspire to her hand. Hence he had left the castle in despair two summers since, resolute to make his fortune by his sword before he openly solicited Maud's love. But though a brave and gallant knight he had been unfortunate, for adhering to the cause of the absent monarch he had been stripped of his little estate by the minions of Prince John, and finally forced by an unjust outlawry to take to the greenwood, like many another loyal gentleman. His old love for Maud led him to linger in the vicinity of her father's castle, and fortune had chanced to bring thither with him, on this occasion, his leader and friend, the banished earl of Huntington, or as he called himself in the forest, Robin Hood. Most of his fellow archers had mingled in the sports unarmed, but their weapons were only a short distance off, so that our hero, on seeing the intentions of the robber noble, had sent his companions to procure their arms and summon their leader, who, with a small band, remained in the wood to guard them —Neville reserving his own interference in the meantime for a critical moment, if such should happen before Robin Hood arrived. We have seen how boldly and effectually he interposed at the right instant.

Great were the rejoicings at Spencer Castle, two days afterward, when its lord arrived bringing the intelligence that King Richard was free and in England; but even more boisterous was the mirth and festivity when, a few months later, Maud and Neville were united, the monarch himself giving away the bride.

Robin Hood was at the wedding, having in the meantime been restored to his earldom. Grace not long after married a knight in King Richard's train.

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THE SECOND WIFE'S DAUGHTER.

BY CAROLINE ORNE.

It was past the middle of autumn, and as the day drew to a close, a storm, which for several hours had given indications of its approach, set in with a violence that made a traveller, who, since early dawn, had been pursuing his journey on horseback, look round with considerable anxiety for the signs of some habitation where he might obtain shelter for the night. None appeared, and adding a large silk handkerchief to the mufflings that already protected his neck and the lower part of his face, and pulling an old fashioned beaver hat more closely over his brow, he proceeded quietly on his way without urging his horse to greater speed. Though his face was thus almost entirely concealed from view, there was that in his air and figure which denoted that he had attained the meridian of life, while, at the same time, though his person was enveloped in a rough overcoat, a glance would have shown that he belonged to a class elevated above the ordinary rank. The road he was travelling was in the northern part of New England, and not only hilly, but in many places rough and broken. It was not long before night fell darkly upon the scene, and the wind began to sough still more loudly and wildly as it swept through the passes of the mountains, which rose at no great distance, driving the sleet and rain full in the traveller's face. On gaining the summit of a hill, therefore, a light which like a star beamed near its base shone cheerily through the gloom. He soon found himself before a large farm-house, enclosed in front by a rough railing, which being unfurnished with a gate, he sought admittance at a door communicating with the kitchen, the only room made comfortable by a fire. The "little candle that had thrown its beams" to the brow of the hill, shone now through one of the back windows, it having been conveyed to the front part of the house only for a temporary purpose. He knocked at the door, and was promptly bid to enter. The farmer and his wife, and two little girls nearly of a size, were the occupants of the kitchen. When, by the invitation of the farmer, a bluff looking man of forty, he had divested himself of his overcoat, and taken a seat in a chair near the fire, he took a slight survey of the different members of the family.

The countenance of the wife, an intelligent looking woman, wore a look of dejection, which evidently had its source in some mental disquietude rather than ill health; but his attention was soon particularly attracted toward one of the children, who, though he supposed her to be the other's sister, kept aloof from the fire, and cowered and drew still further back whenever the farmer passed near her, as if she stood in great fear of him. Though the weather was cold, her feet were bare, and her thin, pallid face exhibited no signs of that joyousness which ought to light up the countenance of a child of twelve years, her apparent age. Her clothing, which was course and much worn, as well as of a material too light for the season, though clean and neatly mended, did not exactly harmonize with several strings of small, light colored blue beads that encircled her neck, showing that the poor child, in common with her sex, possessed the wish to appear pleasing in the eyes of others.

A contrast more decided could not well have existed than that presented by the two children, the other being the perfect personation of that healthful freshness which breathes in fragrance from the rose-bud as it opens its dewy petals to the morning sunbeams. But all this glowing and sunny freshness was lost upon the traveller as he marked her petulant and overbearing demeanor in her intercourse with her pale, timid sister. His indignation was further excited, though directed against her parents rather than herself, by remarking that her clothing was not only new and warm, but of materials much better than were commonly used for the every day wear of the children, or even wives of the richest farmers. Her little chubby feet were encased in warm stockings and neat, substantial shoes, and a real gold necklace, the grand desideratum at that period in a country female's toilet from the age of twelve up to eighty, sparkled on her neck, mingling its bright gleams with her curling hair, which was of a glossy black.

"Agnes," said the farmer, whose name was Whitely, addressing the little, pale girl, "take the quart mug and draw some cider, and don't stand there staring at the gentleman."

A bright color flashed across her cheeks at this coarse rebuke, and Mrs. Whitely hastened to light a candle for her, as if she felt afraid she would be chidden for the least delay. When she returned and had placed the cider upon the table, she, for a moment, hovered over the bright, comfortable fire, near which the fresh, Hebe looking girl sat on a form, one half of which was occupied by a pet dog, with which she spent most of her time in playing, although some knitting work was in her lap. Seeing Agnes bending over the fire she repulsed her with her foot, saying in a loud whisper—

"For shame—you are standing right before the gentleman."

"So you are," said Mr. Whitely, and at the

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same time taking hold of her arm, he thrust her nearly across the room. He then turned to the stranger.

"It is impossible," said he, "to teach her any manners, so I hope you will not blame me, Mr. —— I forget whether you have mentioned your name or not."

"My name is Fordyce—Reginald Fordyce," replied the stranger.

"I never heard of that name before," said Mr. Whitely—"it is not a bad sounding name though. Come sit to the table, Mr. Fordyce," he said, as Mrs. Whitely placed upon it a plate piled high with toast which she had just finished, dipping in melted butter mixed with cream, and a large, deep dish filled with hot pancakes.

"Rachel," said the farmer, "here is room for you at the table, and Agnes mind that you watch the gentleman's great coat while we are eating supper, and see that it does not scorch."

"I will remove the chair," said Mr. Fordyce, "so that my coat will be in no danger of scorching, and then Agnes will be at liberty to eat supper with the rest of us. She does not look so healthy as your other daughter, Mr. Whitely."

"She is no daughter of mine," replied Mr. Whitely, "and if she was I should be ashamed to own her, for, as I said before, it is impossible to teach her any manners."

"You call her Agnes," said Mr. Fordyce—"may I ask her other name?"

"Eveleth," replied Mrs. Whitely. "Eveleth was the name of my first husband, and she was our only child."

Agnes was now told to take a seat at the table, but it was evident that she stood in too much awe of her step-father to enjoy her meal, as she scarcely conveyed a mouthful of food to her lips without stealing a glance at him, as if she expected to be reproved.

As Mr. Fordyce was fatigued by his day's ride, he retired early to rest. A bright morning succeeded the tempestuous night, and when he left his chamber he found a brisk fire was burning in the parlor fire-place, and saw Agnes, whose back was toward him, so that she did not perceive his entrance, busily engaged in beating up the feather-stuffed cushion of the great arm-chair, which was placed in comfortable contiguity to the fire. Having satisfied herself that the cushion was soft as it could be made, she turned to leave the room, and beheld Mr. Fordyce. A bright color instantly suffused her cheeks, and she looked half pleased, half frightened.

"Good morning, my dear," said he, in a clear, cheerful voice, which entered her heart like a gleam of warm sunshine.

She was too timid to reply to this salutation, otherwise than by a curtesy which might have appeared graceful, had she, instead of her own mean and scanty garments, been clad in the flowing robes prescribed by fashion. She then looked at the arm-chair, but without venturing to invite him to sit in it, was about to leave the room when Rachel Whitely entered, much better dressed than the evening before.

"I should be ashamed, Agnes," said she, "to come into the best room looking as you do, when such a gentleman is here."

"He wasn't here when I first came in," replied Agnes, the tears starting into her eyes.

"Well, you needn't stay any longer," said Rachel. "Father told me that *I* might come and keep the gentleman company, and that you must go and bring in some wood and help to get breakfast."

Agnes withdrew, and Rachel, with much apparent self-complacency, drew a chair opposite the one where Mr. Fordyce was seated, where maintaining a perfectly upright position, she for some time employed herself in silently surveying the different portions of her own dress and that of Mr. Fordyce. Tired at last of a silence which Mr. Fordyce was in no humor to interrupt, she said—

"I am going to the academy next summer—father says I may."

"And is not Agnes going too?" he inquired.

"Oh! no, sir," she replied. "As she is poor and always expects to be, she will have to work for a living; but I shall be the richest girl any where round here, for I have an uncle who has earnt a sight of money going to sea, and father says he expects he will give it all to me. If he does I shall be a lady, and ought to have first rate learning."

As Mr. Fordyce made no reply to these remarks, she next amused herself by enumerating the faults of Agnes.

"She had," said she, "to go to bed without her supper last Sunday night."

"For what?" inquired her auditor, whose curiosity was excited to know what offence was deemed sufficiently flagrant to be expiated by a penance, the severity of which can alone be appreciated by one who has the keen appetite of a child who has fasted from twelve to eight.

"Because she couldn't say the long answer in her catechism," replied Rachel, with an animation that made her bright eyes sparkle. "Father said it was because she was obstinate, for she could say every word of it the next morning without looking into the book; but mother said it was because she was worried and frightened."

Soon after breakfast Mr. Fordyce prepared for

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his departure. As he knew that they would accept of no recompense for the trouble he had occasioned them, he addressed a note to Mrs. Whitely, in which he enclosed a small sum of money, "for the benefit," he said, of herself and Agnes, which he placed upon a table, where he supposed she would readily find it.

At parting he gave nothing to Rachel, but he put a card into the hand of Agnes, on which beneath his own name he had written hers, saying as he did so, "keep this carefully till you see me again."

"A fine present I declare," said Rachel, after he was gone; angry that he did not take the same notice of her as of Agnes. "If he had given it to me I would have torn it in two pieces right before his eyes."

Agnes did not think to look at the opposite side of the card till she went to deposit it in a little cedar box, when she saw written a few encouraging words, and the promise, if he lived, to call at the farm-house again in four years.

Agnes, at the time of her mother's second marriage, was seven years old. She was full of health and spirits—free and fearless as a woodland bird, and with a heart such as most hearts will be that have ever been subject to the influences of that healthful, domestic atmosphere, which is full of the dew and sunshine that have their source in gentle and pleasant toned voices speaking kind and encouraging words, and in looks full of cheerfulness.

Her mother was not without her hours of sorrow, for she was a widow, and almost entirely dependent on her own exertions for their support, but she could not bear that even the skirts of the cloud which often darkly hovered over herself should fall upon her child, and in an evil hour she was lured to the home of the rich farmer. When too late, she found that she had become the slave of an imperious and overbearing master, rather than as she anticipated, the wife of a kind and indulgent husband.

She at first made some efforts to correct the pertness and indolence of her step-daughter, and might, in a measure, have succeeded had not her misjudged father, by receiving without the trouble of investigation, everything she said as truth, encouraged her in a habit of falsehood.

As a woman Mrs. Whitely might have thrown off the burthen that was weighing her down with a heart wounded yet not crushed; but when she saw her late joyous and light-hearted child threatened, and even beaten for the slightest misdemeanor, and not unfrequently for the offences of another, till she cowered and trembled at every sudden movement near her, both her moral and physical energies were in danger of giving way, and there were times when she would have gladly welcomed the hour which would have permitted them to lie down in the green churchyard together. Though she could not tell why, for her reasons, which had nothing for their basis except the few words written on the card, were too unsubstantial to bear the weight of words, from the time that Mr. Fordyce was compelled by the tempestuous weather to spend the night with them, a rainbow seemed to be set in the cloud which hovered so darkly over her and her daughter. Inspired by this cheering influence her failing energies revived, and by exerting herself to a degree, which, without this vague incentive existing in her mind would have been impossible, she found leisure to instruct Agnes herself, as Mr. Whitely said she could not be spared to attend the district school.

When summer came, and Rachel, as had been decided prior to the visit of Mr. Fordyce, was sent to a distant academy, there were many hours when the mother and daughter were entirely by themselves. With these a degree of the free and innocent hilarity of happier days re-visited the heart of Agnes. Her voice, naturally sweet, would sometimes gush forth in song, and the timid footstep was exchanged for the free, joyous bound which in her former home often fell like music on her mother's ear. The card given her by Mr. Fordyce was as carefully treasured as if it had been made of gold, and now when Rachel was no longer present to treat it with ridicule, she often kept it between the leaves of the book she was studying, and the sight of her own name written with that of a gentleman's who had spoken so kindly to her revived her courage when her task appeared hard, and encouraged her to persevere.

Rachel remained at school much longer than she would have been willing to sumbit to the restraints of a public seminary, had she not been assured that her rich bachelor uncle would not make her his heiress unless she acquired all these accomplishments desirable for a lady of wealth. She, therefore, while Agnes under the tuition of her mother, whose education well fitted her for the task, was striving hard to acquire a thorough knowledge of those branches which constitute the ground-work of a good English education, was endeavoring, after lightly skimming over these, to obtain a knowledge of the French and Italian languages, and of music and drawing.

The time had at length arrived when Rachel was emancipated from the irksome control of her teachers. Early in the morning she and a Miss Elvina Fales, with whom she had formed an intimacy at the seminary, took their places in the stage-coach which passed within about three

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miles of Rachel's home. Miss Fales, having like Rachel *finished* her education, eagerly accepted her friend's invitation to accompany her home, as she had, to use her own words, "long entertained an anxious desire to enjoy for a few weeks the undisturbed repose of rustic life."

There were two passengers beside themselves, one of whom, a gentleman of middle age, was muffled in a cloak; no uncomfortable addition to his other clothing, for though in May, the white frost had not yet melted from beneath the shade of the fences, and in the hollows of the fields and pastures.

The other passenger was a young man of about two or three and twenty, with a handsome and intelligent countenance, and of a frank, unaffected carriage.

Immediately after they had taken their places in the coach, the gentleman in the cloak pulled his hat over his eyes, which having a broad brim entirely shaded them, as well as the whole of the upper part of his face. He then leaned back and appeared to compose himself for a comfortable nap. As the younger gentleman sought entertainment by looking out at the window, Rachel and Miss Fales soon commenced a conversation between themselves.

"How could you content yourself to stay from home so long?" inquired Miss Fales. "I believe you told me that you had been home only once during the four years you were at the seminary."

"I could spend my time much more pleasantly," replied Rachel, "with some of my school-mates, and I always had plenty of invitations. I could not bear the idea of going home now if I had not the promise of your company a few weeks, for there is no fit companion there for a person of taste and refinement."

"I thought your step-mother had a daughter about your age," said Miss Fales.

"So she has, but I should as soon think of selecting a companion from among the savages. There is one thing, however, that she will do for, and that is to wait on us, though I will warn you now not to be too familiar with her, for a gentleman who happened to stay at my father's one night before I went to the academy took a little notice of her, and don't you think that upon the strength of it she and her mother thought she must go to learning grammer, and rhetoric, and geography."

"Perhaps," said Miss Fales, "your rustic sister imagined she had made a conquest of the gentleman."

"Likely enough," replied Rachel, "for she was full twelve, and he was probably not more than forty-five or fifty."

This answer so wrought upon the risibility of both that they found it impossible to prevent laughing.

"What is her name?" inquired Miss Fales, as soon as she had so far checked her merriment as to enable her to speak.

"Agnes," replied Rachel.

"That is too bad," said Miss Fales—"if I had been in your place I would have made her exchange names with me."

When Rachel pronounced the name of Agnes, the young man, who, to appearance, had paid no attention to what they had been saying, suddenly turned from the window and directed a keen, scrutinizing glance first toward Rachel, then her companion. This at once repressed their volubility, for to have attracted the attention of a gentleman so handsome and so well dressed, was pleasanter even than to attempt to throw ridicule upon Agnes. Rachel might not possess more vanity than many others if she imagined that this glance of her face might impel further regard; for though her features were not remarkably handsome, her complexion was as clear and fresh, and her black eyes as lively and sparkling as they were in childhood. This one keen look appeared to have satisfied him, however, and he again turned to the window. Somewhat vexed at his insensibility, she amused herself by uttering witicisms on the gentleman who still appeared to be soundly sleeping in the opposite corner of the coach. It was not till they stopped to exchange horses that he aroused himself, raised his hat and threw open his cloak, which the softened air began to render burthensome. Both he and the younger gentleman alighted, and as Rachel, who had a faint idea that she had seen him before, was trying to recollect when and where it could be, she heard his companion address him by the name of Fordyce.

"Why Fordyce," said she to Miss Fales, "was the name of the person I have been telling you about."

"Do you mean the gentleman Agnes took such a fancy to?"

"Yes—and I really believe this is the same."

"I hope he slept so soundly that he did not hear what we said."

They were prevented from saying more, as both gentlemen now resumed their seats.

It was about an hour before sunset when they arrived at the hotel, which was within three miles of Rachel's home, and had been built during her absence. This terminated their journey in the stage-coach; and had not Rachel, in the last letter she wrote home, intentionally appeared doubtful as to the day she and her friend expected to arrive,

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her father would have been at the hotel with his horse and wagon, ready to convey them to the farm-house. This was what his daughter feared, for as she knew he would not take the trouble to change his dress, she felt ashamed at the idea of having her fellow passengers, should there happen to be any she considered of consequence, see her father in his coarse, every day garb. After some delay a vehicle was obtained for the accommodation of the ladies, Rachel having in the intermediate time cautioned Miss Fales not to say anything about Mr. Fordyce in the presence of her father, for if he was the person she suspected him to be, she did not wish him to know that he was so near. When they arrived in front of the farm-house, Mr. Whitely and a very lovely looking girl came to the door to welcome them.

"Can that be the little savage who will do to wait on us ladies fresh from the seminary?" whispered Miss Fales in Rachel's ear.

"I am as ignorant who she is as you are," replied Rachel, with a slight degree of petulence.

"You have altered a good deal since I saw you, Rachel," said her father, shaking her heartily by the hand, "and for the better, I think. Agnes has beat you though. Why I should think that she is full half a head taller than you are. Come, Agnes, you must shake hands with Rachel. Before I sleep to-night I shall tell her all about how good you have been, and how you watched by me night and day when I was sick with the fever."

Agnes, in obedience to her father's wish advanced to meet Rachel, who received her offered hand with a very ungracious air.

Miss Fales, not being under the influence of those feelings of envy and jealousy which actuated Rachel, felt delighted at what she termed the romance of finding, amid woods and mountains, a girl so beautiful and graceful as Agnes. In Mrs. Whitely too, who had now joined them, she found a woman entirely devoid of that coarseness she had been taught to expect.

They had just finished supper, and were enjoying the cheerful warmth of a bright fire, which had been kindled in the parlor, when the sound of some vehicle which stopped before the house caused Mr. Whitely to go to the door.

"Mr. Fordyce and our other fellow passenger, as nearly as I can see through the gloom," said Miss Fales, addressing Rachel, who stood at her elbow, as she peeped behind the window curtain.

"I wish they had stayed at the tavern," replied Rachel—"we have had full fatigue enough without being troubled with the company of strangers."

Mr. Fordyce, whom Mr. Whitely at once recognized, introduced his young companion as Clarence Aylesford, his nephew. After a cordial greeting had passed between Mr. Fordyce and Mrs. Whitely, and a rather cold one between him and Rachel and Miss Fales, he looked round the apartment to see if Agnes was present. She was absent on some household duty, and he was about to inquire for her when she re-entered.

For a few moments he surveyed her in silence, for he could hardly believe that the little pale child, trembling at each sudden noise or motion as if she expected chastisement for some unknown offence, could be the lovely girl now in his presence. Her hair, which, when he saw her before, was a pale yellow, had deepened into a warm brown, and hovered in a cloud of sunny curls round her forehead and temples. Her eyes, still of the deep, "delicious blue?" of childhood, were fringed with lashes as long and black as ever veiled the jewel-like splendor of the darkest orbs, while her ruby lip and damask cheek were of that peculiar freshness which is kept alive by the pure well-spring of health. These, as well as the freedom and grace of her carriage, made Mr. Fordyce sensible that she was no longer subject to the iron rule which had formerly crushed down all those joyous impulses which warm the heart of childhood. Her eyes for a moment encountered his, the next, forgetful of the presence of strangers, she cast herself into his arms. It was a moment of deep and lively emotion, for her former dark and cheerless days revived and passed in rapid panorama before her, and she again saw him as when they first met, when he appeared as a guardian angel, and whose ideal presence after his departure had, as it were, encompassed her like a luminous and healing atmosphere, inspiring her with faith, hope and courage. In a few minutes afterward Agnes left the room, but soon returned and presented to Mr. Fordyce the card he had given her four years before.

"This," said she, "if your ideal presence left me was the talisman by which it was restored."

"Had it been in my power to do otherwise," he replied, "I should not have left you with so slight a memorial, yet it was that, perhaps, in part, which gave an upward bend to the twig, which, by being crushed to the earth, was in danger of growing knotty and deformed."

"And it was I that was trampling upon the twig," said Mr. Whitely; "but I was so selfish that all my affections were bound up in myself and child, which hindered me from seeing the good in others. A dangerous sickness, by opening my eyes to the unjust part I had acted toward my wife and her daughter, has enabled me in some measure to mend my fault."

Mr. Fordyce now informed them that when, four years before, he was obliged by the storm

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to seek the shelter of their roof, he was making preparations for a voyage to England, in order to prove his title to an estate that had been left by a distant relative. After a vexatious delay caused by a rival claimant his title was clearly proved; and he had now come to adopt Agnes as a daughter if no objection was offered by herself or friends.

"If you consider me worthy of such generosity," said Agnes, "it is all I ask."

"As to that," said Mr. Whitely, "you might search the whole country over and not find a worthier."

"I am very much of your opinion," replied Mr. Fordyce, who was about to make some further remark, when some one knocked at the outer door.

Mr. Whitely opened it and found that it was his nearest neighbor, who, having been to the post-office, had called to leave a letter he had found there for him.

"This is from my brother Rufus, I know by the writing," said Mr. Whitely, examining the back of the letter.

"That is my rich, bachelor uncle, who is going to give me all his property," said Rachel, addressing Miss Fales, though she spoke loud enough to be heard by all present.

Mr. Whitely who did not know, nor would have readily been made to comprehend that it was any breach of politeness to read a letter in the presence of his guests, was soon absorbed in its contents. At one time a frown slightly contracted his brow, but when he had finished reading it he threw the letter upon the table, saying—"upon the whole, I am glad of it, if it will give him a chance to take any more comfort in his old age."

"Glad of what?" inquired his impatient daughter.

"That your uncle Rufus is married."

"Married?" repeated Rachel. "He ought to be ashamed of himself," and as she saw the air built palace dissolve, which, in imagination, she had built out of the gold contained in her uncle's money-bags, she burst into tears.

"Never mind, child," said her father, "if you won't be your uncle's heiress you shall be mine, seeing that Agnes is so well provided for, and you know that besides the hundred acre lot, which constitutes the homestead, I have two hundred acres of wild land, so that if you get a smart, active lad for a husband, who knows how to wield an axe as well as your father, he will soon have a good part of it under cultivation."

Rachel with as disdainful a toss of her head as the milk-maid in the fable, replied, "if after going to the academy four years I cannot look higher than a farmer, I shall remain single."

By some allusions made by Mr. Fordyce it was soon afterward ascertained that Clarence Aylesford, who had already graduated at one of the principal colleges, having a decided taste for agricultural pursuits, intended to be a farmer, and that in order to gratify his inclination he had purchased a farm on the Hudson.

Mr. Whitely, whose manners savored more of bluntness than suavity, immediately addressed his daughter.

"There, Rachel," said he, "finding out that this young gentleman means to be a farmer, is better than a good meal when I am hungry, and according to my mind if you were as 'cute as you think you are, you would never have expressed your opinion about farmers so freely, till you knew the minds of the present company. But it will teach you a good lesson, I hope, for being a farmer myself, I have no great desire to have my own daughter look down upon farmers in general, and me in particular, because she has been to the academy, and learnt to speak in outlandish tongues and play on the *pianer*."

"For my part," said Miss Fales, "I am delighted with everything relating to rural life; I have often thought how charming it would be to be a shepherdess, and sit in the shade of a tree and play on a lute, or twine the neck of the innocent lambs with wild flowers—don't you think it would, Mr. Aylesford?"

"It might do very well in pleasant weather," he replied with a smile.

"Yes," said Mr. Whitely, "and carding and spinning their wool would be nice work for winter."

"Oh, I dare say," she replied, turning a ring on one of her delicate fingers, "but I am afraid I could never learn."

"Agnes will teach you," said Mr. Whitely, "whenever you are ready to commence."

Mr. Fordyce and his nephew, though warmly pressed to remain, returned to the hotel, where they said they had engaged lodgings for a week or ten days. During their stay no day passed without their calling at the farm-house, and before their departure arrangements were made for Agnes to attend one of the best female seminaries in the country, where she was to remain two years.

Rachel, who found that Agnes was an object of much greater importance than herself, not only in the estimation of Mr. Fordyce and his nephew, but even of Miss Fales, could not conceal her chagrin. Her ill-humor was increased when the latter told her that not finding that part of the country so pleasant as she had

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anticipated, instead of spending three months as had been agreed upon, she intended to leave the same day as Mr. Fordyce and his nephew, as by so doing she should secure pleasant travelling companions most of the way home. If she likewise had an eye to securing a companion for the journey of life as well as her journey home, as Rachel was impolite enough to intimate, she proved unsuccessful; Mr. Fordyce being a confirmed bachelor, and Mr. Aylesford having already made up his mind to marry Agnes if he could obtain her consent. Though this was a consummation which appeared doubtful to himself, it was probably more owing to modesty than any manifestation of dislike on the part of Agnes, as Mr. Fordyce, who, being a spectator, could judge with more coolness, entertained an entirely different opinion.

For the sake of both Agnes and young Aylesford, who, during the two years she was at school, made improvements on his farm which displayed as much judgment as good taste, we are happy to say that the opinion of Mr. Fordyce proved to be correct. Never was there a better wife than our sweet Agnes!

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THE ADOPTED SON.

FROM THE DIARY OF A PHYSICIAN.

THE tourist who passed through the interior of Ohio twenty years ago would scarcely recognize it now. Instead of vast, uncultivated wastes, dense forests "inhabited by wolves, panthers, and by men more savage still," he would see so far as the eye could extend cultivated farms; he would find himself in the "Eden of the world." Instead of the rural hut of the reckless "backwoodsman," he would behold with admiration the lofty mansion of the planter, surrounded with all the luxuries of life.

About half a league from the village of M——, situated on an eminence, and near the centre of a large park, is Mr. Morgan's residence. Our good, old veteran was among the earliest settlers of Ohio, and by industry and economy soon accumulated riches. His family consisted of an only daughter and an adopted soon, Charles Elliott.

Alice Morgan inherited the "soul" of her deceased parent—one flowing with love and gratitude. She had passed fifteen summers: her mind was richly stored; her form was perfect, and her movements easy and graceful. The adopted son had been rescued from a band of savages when but an infant. Mr. and Mrs. Morgan received the orphan infant, nursed, reared, and fostered him as their own child, and gave him the advantages of the best literary institutions that the country afforded. As he grew to manhood, with manners prepossessing and unassuming, a bearing gentlemanly, dignified and commanding, his guardian considered that he had more than realized in the kindness and prospects of his dependant, all that his most sanguine hopes could have expected. The old veteran looked on his daughter Alice and his adopted son as the stay and support of his old age. A separation from them even for a day was a punishment.

Some three months after the celebration of the twenty-first birth-day of Charles, I was called in great haste to visit Mr. Morgan's family. The servant dashed off at full speed immediately on leaving the summons, without giving me time to propound a single question, so I mounted my steed and pushed off toward my friend's place, with doubts and fears mingling in my mind. On arriving, I found everything in a state of confusion. Servants were running to and fro as if momentarily expecting some awful disaster. To my interrogatories, the only reply I could get was "Alice is dying!—Alice is dying!"

I unceremoniously entered the sick chamber, and never shall I forget my feelings on beholding the scene that presented itself. Alice lay

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stretched on her couch, struggling apparently as if in the last agonies of death—her pulse imperceptible, and the complexion and countenance cadaverous. I instantly applied ammonia to the nostrils, ordered stimulating friction, and gave strict injunctions to observe perfect stillness throughout the house. By these means she was gradually aroused from her comatose situation. Convalescence was partially established in six weeks, so much so that with some little difficulty she could visit the various apartments of the house, and to some extent take charge of the domestic affairs.

But the animated, cheerful, and merry countenance that had hitherto characterized our heroine was banished. She was now gloomy and despondent; and obviously suffering under extreme mental suffering. The frequent conversations between Mr. Morgan and myself enabled me to form, as I supposed, an accurate idea of the cause that had wrought a change so terrible in the formerly happy Miss Alice. Charles, naturally of a very affectionate and sympathizing disposition, loved his adopted sister in secret, with that ardor and zeal which a warm heart and youthfulness alone can feel; he had indulged a hope that the day might come when he could claim the rich, the lovely Miss Morgan as his own. But during his intercourse with Alice in the past year he had observed many things in her conduct to which he took exception. In their childhood they had been accustomed to walk, talk, and roam together, always participating in the same amusements. Charles realized his fondest pleasures in exploring the meadows in search of flowers to ornament the apparel of his "dear little wife," as he then called her. Thus they lived till Charles' eighteenth year, when reluctantly he at the request of Mr. Morgan had to depart from his long cherished home in order to complete his education. Regularly during each vacation he returned to the home of his youth, anticipating an anxious welcome and a fond embrace from the object of his affections. But alas! in this he was disappointed. On his third visit he perceived a backward diffidence in Alice, which gradually grew, as he continued his visits, into disinterestedness and cold indifference.

Although he had never declared his attachment, or even spoken of love to Alice since she had grown to womanhood, he argued with himself that he had shown it in his behavior on so many different occasions that it would be impossible for her to mistake his attentions. He loved her as he did his life, and thus to be rejected was more than one so proud could bear.

His resolutions were soon formed. He determined on an immediate departure, and accordingly announced his intention to Mr. Morgan and Alice. The former made all manner of objections, and adduced all possible arguments to defeat the purpose of Charles. The latter remained silent. Charles departed, no one knew where.

Four days after his departure a letter from him was delivered into the hands of Alice. She tremblingly tore open the seal and read as follows:—

"H——, Ohio, June 1834.

My Dear Alice—In departing from the home of my youth I thought of leaving the country without making known the cause—but mature consideration has changed my purpose. I know that you are aware of what I am about to write, but permit me for this time to express the sentiments of a heart conquered by your charms and your beauty, and I will solemnly promise not again to molest your happiness by imposing upon you unwelcome letters. In youth I loved you as a sister; in mature years and manhood I loved you with that fervency that none ever before loved. Your being is treasured in my mind as a precious relic. Every action and circumstance that is in any way associated with you is cherished as an invaluable remembrance. I will continue to love you, though you spurn me. My attachment is such as will never change. Adieu, I leave the country, and perhaps forever.

That health, prosperity and happiness may attend you is my prayer.

Your adopted brother affectionately,

Charles ———."

This epistle will account for the sudden illness and altered condition of our heroine. She had loved Charles in secret. But, at last, fearing that her affections were not reciprocated she assumed indifference. But now that he was gone, and the motives that prompted his hasty departure were thus unexpectedly made known, she became unconscious of everything, and fell senseless to the floor.

The summer had passed, another, and yet a third; and not a word of intelligence had been received at Morgan Hall respecting Charles. The health of Alice in the meantime was daily growing more feeble.

Six years had elapsed from the time of Charles Elliott's departure from our neighborhood, and no trace of his "whereabouts," or of his existence had we received. We mourned him as among the beings that were. In the meantime the inmates of Morgan Hall had recovered their former cheerfulness. Occasionally a wonder would escape them as to what could have become of Charles.

Some six months previous to the above time our neighborhood was considerably excited by the location of a young Eastern physician among us,

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who from his superior talents and acquirements commanded universal respect and admiration. Dr. Howard, shortly after settling in our vicinity, was introduced in Morgan Hall, and soon became a frequent visitor and a favorite with the inmates.

At length, but not unexpectedly, as rumor had established the fact before, I received a note announcing the wedding day of Alice, with a very pressing invitation to attend. At the appointed hour there was assembled in the parlor of Mr. Morgan quite a goodly number of neighbors to witness the nuptial ceremony.

The ceremony began. The minister proceeded uninterrupted until he had to address the bridegroom. "Mr. William Howard," he said, "will you——"

"I ask pardon for the interruption," at this crisis interposed the groom, "but know me by my true name, Charles Elliott!

He could say no more, for, at this instant, the bride fell fainting into the arms of her husband.

The remainder of our story is soon told. Charles Elliott, during his absence, had travelled over the most of Europe, had returned to Philadelphia, and graduated in the Jeffersonian Medical Institute. Five years had wrought in his appearance and manners a great change: and to assist nature he had dyed his hair, which was of a light color, to a jet black. This, together with a huge pair of military whiskers, so entirely altered his appearance that his most intimate friends could have scarcely recognized him. After completing his medical education he returned to Ohio—called and introduced himself to me—made me familiar with his purposes, and desired my assistance that he might the better accomplish them. This was granted, and the sequel is known. I very often visit Mr. Morgan's family, and a more happy and contented one I have never met.

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THE LAST OFFER.
BY ANGELINE E. ALEXANDER.
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THE LAST OFFER.

BY ANGELINE E. ALEXANDER.

Amid the picturesque scenery of the Wyoming Valley there stood, a few years ago, a neat cottage, around which the luxuriant sweets of nature, and the tasteful trainings of art, seemed to vie with each other for the palm of beauty. It was the residence of Mrs. Malcolm, the widow of an officer of the army, and her daughter. Mrs. Malcolm had known sad reverses. She was her parent's only daughter—her brothers had no other sister, consequently she was the pet of the family; but in the days of our grandmothers the pets of the family were not spoiled as they now are. Mrs. Malcolm's mother could not see the necessity there was for girls to read and write like lawyers, while to be unable to bake a good loaf of bread, to spin the yarn, and afterward knit it into stockings, would have amounted in her opinion to unpardonable sins. Therefore her daughter was carefully trained in all the mysteries of household duties, while her mind was left without culture, except that which the schoolmaster, whom a few of the wealthier families had engaged to teach their children, boarding him about by turns, had endeavored to impress upon her by dint of long lectures about her mischievousness and strokes of the birchen ferule upon her hand, from which in those days neither age nor sex was exempt. In spite of these helps to improvement the young lady grew up a beauty, and added to her personal charms and cheerful disposition was the substantial fact of her father being one of the wealthiest farmers in the Valley. What else was wanting to constitute her the belle of Wyoming? And the belle she was. This plump, rosy-lipped, cherry-cheeked, vivacious maiden caught the fancy of Captain Malcolm, who happened to be at the Valley while on a furlough from duty. We dare not be guilty of so much injustice to the gallant captain's memory, as to suppose that the broad acres of the father gave greater zest to the daughter's charms. All we have to record is, that in due time the handsome and sprightly Ellen Armstrong became the wife of Captain Philander Malcolm, of the Washington Light Guards. Mrs. Malcolm was a happy wife; but the lapse of years brought sorrow. After the death of her father the property was divided among the heirs, and through the unintentional inadvertancy of her husband her portion became irretrievably involved. One after another she buried her children, until the youngest alone was left, and last, and most heart-rending of all, her husband fell in the service of his country during

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the last war. Time had done much toward softening the severity of Mrs. Malcolm's grief, and she still possessed a good share of the buoyancy of spirits that characterized her when young.

Toward the close of a warm day in summer, Mrs. Malcolm and her daughter were quietly seated in their plain, yet tastefully furnished parlor, the former busily engaged with her knitting, the latter giving the last delicate touches to an exquisite painting which she had sketched from an adjacent view.

"Ellen," said the mother, without raising her eyes or ceasing her work, "do you intend to be married to young Squire Hobson?"

"How do you know that I shall ever have the chance, dear mother," replied Ellen, while the mischievous dancing of her eyes, and the scarcely perceptible curl of her lip, very plainly told that it would be no grief to her if she never had.

"How do I know!—why I'm sure of it—what else would bring him here so constantly?—and I am delighted that you are about to make so excellent a match. His family has ever been one of the wealthiest and most influential in the state, and being his father's sole heir he inherits the whole of the property."

"In my opinion there are other qualifications necessary in a husband beside wealth and influence. I should want to respect and love the man whom I marry."

"Love—to be sure—well who couldn't love Squire Hobson! He's handsome, steady and rich."

"He may be all that, mother; but there is a boorishness about him, the sure evidence of an uncultivated mind, that grates harshly upon my feelings."

"Pooh, that's all nonsense! No matter how good looking, or rich, or influential a man may be now-a-days, the young ladies turn up their nose at him, unless he has a printed bit of paper, a deplomy, I believe they call it, to show that he has been inside of a college; but many a girl will repent it when it is too late. They can't all expect to marry ministers, or lawyers, or doctors, or officers. To be sure I married an officer," continued Mrs. Malcolm, while a smile of complacency spread over her features, "but such things don't happen often, and nobody else in the whole county could get him."

"Well, mother, you would not have married any other man than my father—would you?"

"How can I tell, child, when no one else ever asked me."

Ellen bent over her painting to conceal the smile she could not suppress at her mother's simple heartedness.

"But, mother," resumed Ellen, after a considerable pause, in which the old lady was doubtless meditating upon the powerful artillery of her charms which were brought to bear upon Capt. Malcolm's heart, and which actually took the citadel by storm, carrying away the commander a prisoner of war. "Why are you so anxious for me to marry? Suppose I should never change my situation, would it be a very dreadful thing?"

"Certainly, my dear—some how or other it seems a kind of disgrace to be an old maid, because everybody takes it for granted that an old maid never had an offer of marriage. If you were to be one, which I hope you will not, we might tell it a thousand times over and nobody would believe that Squire Hobson ever asked you to have him."

At this Ellen laughed outright. "That everlasting Squire Hobson again, I wish he was—"

But Ellen checked herself, for she saw from the rapidity with which her mother's fingers flew, and the wonderful lengthing of the stocking she was knitting, that her displeasure was rising proportionably.

"Please excuse me for laughing, mother; but you have so many queer notions that I cannot help it, and then our ideas of an old maid differ so. I consider an old maid to be one who thinks too much of her own happiness to marry any body rather than nobody, for I presume that any one can get some one if it is a subject their hearts are much set on."

"Oh, well! I can't argue about things as you can that has an education, for I suppose if you were to try, you could make it very clear from some of your grammer rules, that after all an old maid is a young lady of sixteen, as people who have learning can prove anything they please; but common sense teaches us that it is natural and right for all girls to marry, and I should be very glad to see you married to a good man, who was able to take care of you."

"Mother, I do believe you are getting apprehensive that Squire Hobson's will be my last offer," exclaimed the laughing Ellen, "and that probably you will have an old maid daughter. Let me see at what age do they enter the ranks —twenty-five—is it not?—well if I live until the twenty-first of next month, I shall have completed my twenty-fourth year; so you see there is some ground for your fears."

"You may laugh now; but the time is coming when you will both think and act differently. Of the many good offers you have had, not one *exactly* suited. There was young Blake, you wouldn't have him, because you did not like the expression of his eyes, or the color, I don't know which—then came Mr. Townsend, he did not suit, because he was entirely too old—(and

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he so rich too!) Mr. Jones' son was dismissed, because his father was a tyrant at home, and you were afraid the son would be like him. After him Mr.——"

"Dear mother, please stop one moment. Any one to hear you, would think your daughter had been quite a belle. You are not certain that any of the personages you have mentioned would have had me. I am sure I never asked them if they would."

"No!—nor ever gave them a chance to ask you."

"But surely my mother does not want me to marry a man who is disagreeable to me, because he is rich and influential!"

"Disagreeable!—why surely you do not think Squire Hobson disagreeable. I can tell you that many of our finest ladies would be glad to call themselves Mrs. Squire Hobson. Beside you must not expect to be exactly suited in every particular. Your head is full of some foolish notions that you read in poetry books and love stories when you went to boarding-school. I wish I had never sent you, perhaps then you would have done as I want you to do, and——"

The old lady suddenly stopped.

"Married Squire Hobson," thought Ellen in her heart; but she dared not utter it.

"Dear mother," said Ellen, "I have always endeavored to yield to your wishes, and seldom fail, except when upon the subject of marriage. I am very happy as I am, and do not want to marry. If in course of time I should desire to enter that state, I have no doubt but that a suitable companion will be sent to me."

"No there wont!" exclaimed Mrs. Malcolm with warmth; "I don't believe in sitting quietly down, folding one's hands, and then trusting in Providence to—to—to——"

"To send one a husband, would you say, mother," quickly added the laughter-loving Ellen, and with great difficulty she restrained her merriment so far as to prevent another outbreak, for, notwithstanding her filial affection, Ellen could not but enjoy her mother's embarrassment at the ridiculousness of her own idea. However, she succeeded in regaining her composure in time to discover that her mother had dropped a stitch in her knitting, a catastrophe that had occurred but once before within her recollection, and that was upon the occasion of Squire Hobson's first visit.

After Mrs. Malcolm had recovered from her confusion she laid down her work in her lap, and regarding Ellen with a look of great affection: "my child," said she, "you asked me a while ago why I was so anxious that you should marry. I will tell you why. I am growing old and feeble, and before I die I want to know that you have some one to cherish and protect you. As you well know, our means are limited. This property and the pension I receive from government is our support, the latter of which will cease at my death: hence my last hours will be embittered by the thought that I shall leave my beloved child dependent upon the cold charities of an unfeeling world. This is the reason that I anxiously desire to see you settled in life. Squire Hobson is kind-hearted, loves you, and would make a most excellent husband, even if he is not quite so polished as you wish. I could close my eyes in peace when I knew that my daughter was provided for. Now, my dear," continued Mrs. Malcolm, as she arose to leave the room, and approaching Ellen bent over and kissed her, "weigh these things well, and act as you think best."

Ellen threw her arms around her mother's neck, and kissing her over and over again, promised obedience. When Ellen Malcolm was alone, her first impulse was to indulge her feelings in tears; but this she knew would never help her to a decision, so drying away the pearly drops that were chasing each other down her cheeks, she set herself steadily to determine her future course. The fact was that Squire Hobson had that morning offered her his heart, hand and fortune, and she had promised an answer the next day. The next day had almost come, and she was still undecided.

If the reader will look back a few years with us, we may be able to understand the cause of Ellen's indecision better than she did. In the days of Ellen's childhood she had a playmate and champion, about four years older than herself, named Henry Churchill. Henry's father was the Principal of a flourishing seminary in the Valley, and from him Ellen received the first rudiments of education. The sudden death of Mr. Churchill, which was occasioned by a fall from his horse, left Henry at sixteen a dependent orphan. He immediately came to Philadelphia to seek employment, and was so fortunate as to obtain it in the store of a benevolent and kind-hearted gentleman, who received him as assistant clerk. Mr. Stephens was one of those few rich men who feel that money is not given to them to be spent in self-indulgence alone; but by mitigating the sufferings of the distressed, and assisting the honest strivings of the virtuous, he endeavored to rightly dispense the treasures with which his Maker had entrusted him. From the first Henry Churchill's appearance and general deportment pleased him, and when he found that he was an intelligent and thoughtful lad, whose morals and education had been carefully

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attended to, his interest increased. He therefore encouraged Henry to confide in him, and look upon him as a friend. Henry Churchill related to Mr. Stephens his early history, and how the death of his father had not only wrung his heart with anguish at the loss of a tender parent; but had also deprived him of the means of education, by which he had hoped to distinguish himself in some honorable profession. Still further conversation elicited the fact that the desire of Henry's soul was to enter the naval service of his country. Mr. Stephens' sympathies were enlisted, and he determined that Harry's hopes should not be disappointed. Accordingly, unknown to young Churchill, he applied for a midshipman's warrant for him, and as his influence with the government was very great the appointment was soon made. When Mr. Stephens placed the commission in Harry's hands, so perfect was his surprise, and so full his heart, that, for an instant, his feelings overcame him; but quickly recovering himself, he clasped his benefactor's hand in his, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, poured forth his gratitude in broken sentences. There was a dewiness too about Mr. Stephens' eyes as he patted Harry's hand, and told him he wanted no thanks. The consciousness of having made a deserving fellow happy was reward enough for him.

Three years from the time Henry Churchill left Wyoming Valley found him once more treading its soil, but under very different circumstances. He was then a lone and dependent orphan, with no cheering prospect for the future. Now having applied himself with diligence, he had passed his examination before the navy board with great credit, and obtained permission to visit his native place ere he entered the service of his country as acting midshipman. Three years had wrought a great change in Harry Churchill, at least so thought Ellen Malcolm. All the younger portion of the inhabitants pronounced him remarkably handsome, while the older ones peered at him over their spectacles, declaring it was wonderful that Schoolmaster Churchill's boy had turned out such a decent looking lad. Ellen Malcolm at fifteen was not quite so wise as when she reached the mature age of twenty-four, and to her fancy there lurked a world of honor in the gilt band round Harry's cap, and the still more conspicuous one upon his shoulder. And when these marks of preferment happened to be set off by a pair of dark, lustrous eyes beneath the one, and broad, manly shoulders encircled by the other, it is a matter of question whether or not they may prove dangerous to fair ladies' hearts, even when they cannot plead the youthful inexperience of fifteen. The reader will now perceive that owing to these said gilt bands and dark eyes, the host of worthies whom Mrs. Malcolm had enumerated as her daughter's suitors, had met with a polite but decided dismissal, and Squire Hobson was about to share their fate.

"What ought I to do?" said Ellen, speaking to herself, "here is a most excellent offer—a man of good principles, unblemished reputation, and able to provide for me to the extent of my wishes; and because he is not quite so refined as some others, I turn away in disgust. Indeed I do not deserve so good an offer. Besides I have no doubt but that it is the last one I shall ever have, as I presume ladies of an uncertain age are not much troubled with such things. 'Tis true I might keep twenty-four for five or six years; but then I have no certain guarantee that at their close I should be able to merge my single blessedness into a state of connubial felicity; but seriously, I wish I could love the Squire, I have tried my best to do so; but my heart refuses. What a foolish creature I am thus to displease my kind mother, and beggar myself all for a wild chimera of my brain, a silly fancy of my childish days. I wonder where my pride of character is! How supremely absurd! To love a man who has never given me the first thought; and who, on his return, will look upon me as superannuated, and as my dear mother says, would never believe that Squire Hobson had made a proposal. It is not probable that after having visited different parts of the world, and mingled with the young and beautiful of his own and other lands, that he will be likely to discover new charms in the plain country girl with whom he played when a boy. I feel my wounded self-esteem rising up to my assistance. I do hope it will cure me of this ridiculous love fancy. Now I am resolved—Henry Churchill cares not for me, and I will not care for him, or think about him any more."

Ellen Malcolm thought she was telling the truth—nay, she was sure of it; and she pronounced the words slowly and distinctly, with a slight elevation of voice, that the inanimate objects around her might witness that these were the sentiments of her heart. Poor Ellen! how little she knew of that treacherous heart of hers. Ere the echo of her words died away she had buried her face in her hands, and leaning on the table near her, yielded to a passionate burst of grief. From this indulgence she was aroused by the approach of heavy steps, and she had scarce time to dry her tears and compose herself when the portly figure of Squire Hobson darkened the door. It was a most unpropitious moment for a visit from the Squire, for

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notwithstanding Ellen's good resolutions, she had been thinking of Henry Churchill all the time she was crying, and she could not help contrasting his handsome person and polished manners with the plain, straight-forward Squire. Squire Hobson apologized for having called before the appointed time, and made an awkward attempt at an excuse about a lover's impatience. Their interview was short. Ellen in the most delicate manner possible, respectfully, but firmly declined his offer, and the Squire departed muttering to himself that if ever he was fool enough to go sparking again to another boarding-school girl, he hoped he might lose the very best horse he owned.

About two months after Mrs. Malcolm's conversation with her daughter upon her settlement in life; Ellen's resolution never again to think of Henry Churchill; and the Squire's rejection; Mrs. Malcolm returned from church one Sunday in uncommon perturbation of spirits.

"Well if that's not too bad!" said she, throwing herself upon a chair, and addressing her daughter, who had remained at home on account of a severe headache. "Who do you think is married?—but you might guess forever and not find out—such a sweep as they came up the aisle with when everybody was in their seats just to show themselves—I never heard one word of the sermon afterward. I do say it is really too much—I can hardly help crying when I think of it"—and the old lady ran on until she was compelled to pause for breath.

A faintness crept around Ellen's heart, for she felt persuaded that unknown to any one, Henry Churchill had visited the Valley, and upon this bright, rosy morning had made his appearance in church, with a young and lovely bride. However she summoned sufficient courage to inquire in a comparatively careless tone, "who it was that had created such a sensation?"

"Who was it?—you want to know, do you? Ah! but you will be sorry enough when you hear it! Why, it was Squire Hobson and his bride."

"Squire Hobson and his bride!" exclaimed Ellen, the weight being lifted from her heart, and jumping up she clapped her hands joyously, "is that all?"

"That all!" repeated her mother in amazement, who expected the least Ellen could do would be to faint, "I don't know how much more you would ask. But what makes all that dust in the road?—sure enough, if it isn't the Squire, driving round this by-road to show you his elegant, open carriage. I'll draw in the shutter and peep through the slats; just come and look at it, Ellen, isn't it splendid?" said Mrs. Malcolm, who seemed to feel a kind of pride in the equipage that might have been her own. "Only see too how her white veil and ribbons fly in the breeze, and with what an air of triumph she tosses her head as they pass the house. Ah! you ugly-looking thing!" continued the old lady, in a particularly vexed tone, "you need not turn up your little pug nose that way. It's only chance that you are sitting where you are. My Ellen wouldn't have your old husband, and so he thought that, to spite her, he would take you."

Mrs. Malcolm opened the shutter wide, and keyed her voice to a considerably higher pitch, in the hope that her words might reach the ears of the unconsciously offending Mrs. Squire Hobson.

"Well, that's some satisfaction—I hope she heard me," said Mrs. Malcolm, drawing in her head as the carriage turned a corner of the road and was lost to her view. "Ellen," exclaimed she, as her eye fell upon her daughter, the sight of whom seemed to revive the old desire of possessing the Squire and his riches, "you might have been riding there instead of that creature if you had not been such a——"

Mrs. Malcolm found that her anger was getting the better of her, so she finished her sentence by whirling out of the room, and violently slamming the door after her.

Time sped calmly on with Ellen, notwithstanding Squire Hobson used to drive his bride to church every Sunday morning in their elegant carriage. Summer with its heats melted away, and autumn's golden harvests had been gathered in. One night, later in the fall, Ellen was aroused from her peaceful slumber by a sense of suffocation. After a great effort she arose, when to her dismay she found that the room was filled with smoke. From the reflection of the blaze, the cracking of the timbers, and the shaking of the house, she comprehended all in an instant. Rushing from her own to her mother's apartment, she awakened her with the terrible words, "mother! mother! the house is on fire!—rise, or we shall be lost!" With the assistance of their servant, in whose part of the house the fire originated, and whom, at great risk to herself, Ellen at length aroused from her deep sleep, they succeeded in saving what silver they possessed, and some of their most valuable articles. Their neighbors alarmed by the light hastened to the spot, and found Mrs. Malcolm and her daughter shivering in the keen wind of a November night, and weeping over their dear home, which the devouring flames were fast consuming. Every attention that kindness could prompt was bestowed upon the sufferers, and many a generous offer made them of a home. Mrs. Malcolm

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gratefully accepted the proposal of their nearest neighbor to return with him that night and remain as long as they pleased. "Oh, Ellen!" said Mrs. Malcolm, as with sorrowful heart they pursued their way toward the house that was to shelter them, "if you had only married Squire Hobson we would not have been suffering as we now are."

Ellen's spirit was too sad to allow a smile—indeed she was not sure but that she would gladly have accepted the Squire's offer if the afflictions of this night had been foreseen. Mrs. Malcolm's youngest brother, the only near relative whom death had spared her, kindly offered a house to his sister and niece, and did every thing in his power to make them comfortable; but his wife, an illiberal and narrow-minded woman, found much fault with Mrs. Malcolm's whims, as she termed them, and expected Ellen to become a kind of waiting-maid to her and her children. This wounded the generous feelings of Mrs. Malcolm and Ellen, and dreary indeed did the long winter months pass to both. As the spring began to open, Mrs. Malcolm, who still possessed much energy of character, and whose spirit had been roused by the unfeeling treatment of her sister-in-law, informed Ellen that after consulting with her brother, she had decided upon a plan for their future maintenance, which was to sell the farm they owned in the Valley, and with the proceeds establish themselves in Philadelphia, where, by Mrs. Malcolm taking a few boarders, and Ellen teaching music and painting, they might derive a genteel and independent support. At first it seemed impossible to Ellen that her mother and herself could live in a great city like Philadelphia. The obstacles appeared insurmountable, and her heart almost fainted when she thought that upon her accomplishments they were to depend in part for sustenance; but frequent conversations with her mother and uncle lessened her fears, and she at length consented to the plan. The sale of their farm was soon effected, and everything speedily arranged for their removal to Philadelphia. An acquaintance of theirs who was coming to the city to purchase goods attended them down, and provided them with a respectable boarding-house. TO BE CONCLUDED.

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ROSALIE.

BY MISS LOUISE OLIVIA HUNTER.

"In truth she was a light and lovely thing,
Fair as the opening floweret of the Spring;
The bright rose crimsoned o'er her glowing cheek,
And her eyes seemed without the tongue to speak."
— MRS. NORTON.

In a small apartment of an humble dwelling in the city of Boston, toward the close of a pleasant summer afternoon, sat a youthful female busily engaged plying the needle. She was apparently about eighteen years of age, and her countenance was one of extreme loveliness, though that fair cheek was very pale, and those soft, blue eyes wore that expression of languor which never fails to betray the invalid. Ever and anon she would lay aside her work, and allow her head to rest for a moment upon the table before her, then with new resolve to combat against the sensations that were evidently so oppressive, she would hastily resume her labors. Suddenly the door of the apartment was softly opened, and a young man entered unobserved and advanced to her side.

"Eva!" he exclaimed, in a tone of mingled surprise and reproach, while the startled girl made a vain effort to conceal her employment, "Eva—what means this? Do you not know that you are overtasking your strength?—are you not aware that your feeble frame is ill able to bear this exertion?"

"Nay, brother, chide me not," interrupted his companion, raising her eyes pleadingly to his own—"I am, perhaps, stronger than you imagine—and besides I shall be far happier in the knowledge that I am contributing my little mite toward our mutual support."

"And by so doing prostrate yourself upon the bed of sickness, perchance of death!" rejoined her brother, in a tone of deep sadness, "no, Eva, I tell you it must not, shall not be."

"It must indeed," replied Eva, in a tone of determination—"ah! Edgar, you can hide the truth from me no longer; I know that our poverty is greater than you will confess; I know that day after day you have been vainly seeking employment, and that soon we shall be obliged to leave this dwelling for one still humbler—and knowing this feel it is my duty to do all in my power toward our future maintenance. And so to-day when that kind-hearted Mrs. Morris answered my petition for needle-work, by sending me sufficient to occupy my time for a week to come, I was very, very thankful. And deem not, my brother, that any solicitations will induce me to abandon my task."

The young man made no reply. He knew and felt that there was indeed necessity for her labor, though he had ever sought to disguise the truth from his sister in the daily hope that the morrow would dawn more brightly upon their prospects. Very bitter were Edgar Hastings' thoughts at that moment, for his mind was busy contrasting the past with the present, and his memory reverted to the time when his society had been sought after and courted by the gay and wealthy; and when his gentle sister Eva, who had now risen from her sick bed to endeavor by the work of her hands to procure money for the commonest necessaries of life, was the star and idol of the brilliant circles of fashion. And this but a few short months before!

The father of Edgar and Eva Hastings had been one of New York's merchant princes, but reverses of fortune had unexpectedly come upon him, and in a single hour he who had never known a want beheld upon his path ruin and poverty. That fearful stroke was more than his proud spirit could brook, and the morning after the knowledge of his failure was acquired he was found lying cold and stiff upon his couch. The decease of their father was a far greater shock to Edgar and his sister than the deprivation of their accustomed luxuries. At first they bore the stroke of poverty bravely, deeming that those who had been the associates of their prosperous days would aid them in the time of adversity. But all too soon came the bitter lesson that the flight of wealth too often brings with it the loss of friendship, if such it can be called—and the sensitive orphans learned by degrees to shrink from meeting those with whom they had once familiarly mingled. Edgar Hastings had been educated for the bar, and a brilliant career had been predicted for him by the friends of his prosperity; but the misfortunes and death of his parent had deprived him of the means of pursuing his destined profession. At the period when my tale begins he had passed his twenty-first birth-day, while his sister was his junior by three years. To Eva he was most devotedly attached, and it was on her account that he deplored the want of wealth most deeply. She was so beautiful, so delicate, and had been so tenderly nurtured—how would she be able to bear up under the pressure of unaccustomed privations! Eva was naturally very fragile, and the sudden death of her father had been the cause of a dangerous fit of illness, from which she had never entirely recovered. She knew that contrasting their former style of living with their present, they were indeed poor—but thought that they would still have sufficient to support themselves in comparative comfort. And in this her brother had never undeceived

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her, though alas! he was well aware that the little they possessed would barely suffice to maintain them for a few months, unless he could obtain occupation. And his exertions to this last effect had hitherto been of no avail—he met with supercilious haughtiness and sometimes rebuffs wherever he applied, and then completely disheartened he would return again to his humble home. Doubtless there were many who had they been well acquainted with Edgar Hastings' difficulties, would have endeavored to aid him. But discouraged by the coldness of a few, he reflected not that there might be others of more kindly feelings, and yielding at last to the earnest entreaties of his sister, who felt most keenly the neglect of those whom she had ever regarded as loving friends, he removed from his native city to Boston. Scarcely had they succeeded in securing an abode, when Eva again became alarmingly ill, and for some weeks lingered upon the confines of the grave. Words could ill describe the grief, the agony that dwelt in the bosom of Edgar Hastings as he hung over the couch of that lovely and beloved sister, dreading that each moment would be her last. But Eva did not die: yet it was a long time ere she was sufficiently recovered to leave her chamber. It was during the hours of convalescence that the conviction of their extreme poverty suddenly flashed upon her mind, and she formed the secret resolution of trying to gain a livelihood by her needle. The day on which my tale commences, she had bent her feeble steps toward a fancy store in the neighborhood, and had there sought a supply of work. That she was successful the reader is already aware. The owner of the store, Mrs. Morris, was a benevolent and sympathizing woman; and the pale, sad face and sweet voice of Eva Hastings instantly awakened an interest in her heart, while having luckily on hand more sewing than her assistants could well accomplish, she gladly, as she declared, disposed of part to Eva.

At a late hour that same evening, Edgar Hastings was returning from an errand which had taken him a short distance from home, when, as he passed through one of the most fashionable streets, he observed a female issuing stealthily from the door of a stately dwelling. She was enveloped in a large mantle—and imagining that there was something suspicious in her movements as she hastened past him, he resolved to watch her and learn whither her steps were directed. The night was unusually dark and the streets almost deserted—but quickening his pace he hurried after the person who had attracted his notice, and after following her for more than an hour was surprised and alarmed on seeing her at last take a course which led to the river side. In a few minutes more she had reached the very edge of one of the wharves, and in another instant would have precipitated herself into the water below—but a strong hand suddenly detained her, and giving vent to one low cry, the mysterious female fell insensible into the arms of Edgar Hastings! Scarcely knowing what to think, the young man's first impulse was to return her to the house from whence she had proceeded; and with the assistance of a gentleman who just then passed by, he procured a conveyance, and lifting his unconscious burden into it, they were driven rapidly onward.

In a few minutes they arrived at the destined spot, and leaving the still inanimate form of the female within the carriage, Hastings quickly alighted and sought admittance to the dwelling.

The door was soon opened by a grey-haired serving man, and in a few words the young gentleman made his errand known. As he spoke, a cry of joy burst from his auditor's lips, and scarcely waiting to hear the whole of the story he sprang toward the carriage, and ere many seconds had elapsed returned bearing in his arms the strange being whom Edgar Hastings had forcibly withheld from the cold grasp of death.

"Thank God!—thank God!" exclaimed the old man—"it is indeed her—my poor, sweet lady!" And without giving any further explanation, he hurried with his burden toward a distant apartment. Hastings remained standing in the hall wondering what could be the meaning of the affair, and wishing most heartily for a solution of the mystery. More than ten minutes sped—and then, just as the young man was about to leave the house, an elderly female of respectable appearance issued from an adjoining room. She seemed greatly agitated, and hurriedly advancing toward Hastings with tears of gratitude, thanked him for saving the life of her beloved lady, the mistress of that noble mansion, whose reason having been affected by the death of two very dear relations, in the delirium of fever she had escaped the vigilance of her attendants, and sought to destroy herself in the manner already recorded. Her flight had been discovered when it was too late, and though the servants had been despatched in every direction in search of her, several of them had already returned, but without any tidings of the missing one. His sudden appearance, with the object of their solicitude, had, as Hastings was now informed, caused such a revulsion of feeling among the household, that in their deep joy at having recovered their beloved lady, they had

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at first forgotten to thank the author of it. As she concluded, the speaker again and again repeated her earnest thanks for his kindness; and when Edgar Hastings was about to depart, she requested him to acquaint her with his residence, which he at first hesitated in doing; but at length obeying an inward prompting, he gave her the desired information.

As Hastings wended his way homeward his thoughts dwelt entirely upon the scene in which he had been so prominent an actor, and he busied his mind in vain conjectures concerning the appearance of the lady whom he had preserved from so untimely an end. He had not obtained even the slightest glimpse of her face, the mantle which she wore having shrouded her form and countenance completely, and whether she was young or old, beautiful or otherwise, was a matter of ignorance.

More than six weeks passed away after the occurrence last related, Edgar continuing as unsuccessful as usual in his endeavors to obtain employment; and Eva from the proceeds of her needle barely managing to support herself and brother. One morning as the latter was preparing for a walk, a note addressed to himself was brought to his dwelling by a servant in livery, and wondering much whence it came, he opened it in haste and glanced over the contents. It proved to be from the lady on whom six weeks previous he had conferred so great a benefit, requesting an interview with him that evening that she might have an opportunity of thanking him for the service he had rendered her.

The epistle was signed "Rosalie Grahame," and worded so entreatingly, the writer evidently so earnestly desired to see him, that Hastings could not dream of refusing her request. He, therefore, returned answer by the bearer of the communication, that he would wait upon the lady the succeeding evening at her residence.

For the rest of that day Edgar Hastings thought of little else than the coming interview, and once more a thousand surmises relating to the lady whom he was so soon to behold, filled his mind. Again and again he wondered whether she was young or old—but at length came to the conclusion that being the mistress of that mansion, she must undoubtedly be somewhat advanced in life.

"And who knows," suggested Eva, who had been the confident of his thoughts, "who knows, dearest Edgar, but her acquaintance may be of great value to you. She is no doubt very wealthy, and perhaps will be of material assistance to you by the influence which one in her station must inevitably possess."

And as the young girl spoke, the eyes of the brother brightened for an instant, but the glow soon died away; for experience had taught him that he should repress all those sanguine hopes. Besides there was something repugnant in the idea of receiving favors from one toward whom he was thus situated: it seemed too much like accepting a reward for an action which he considered as a mere impulse of humanity. But just then his glance fell upon the pale cheek of his sister—that sister who had been reared so tenderly, and who was now daily making greater exertions than her strength admitted, and his heart smote him while he inwardly determined to subdue all pride for the sake of Eva, if by that struggle he could have the slightest hope of one day restoring her to her wonted station. He felt that were but the path to which all his aspirations pointed, once open before him, no effort should be wanting to surmount all obstacles.

At the appointed hour that evening Hastings repaired to the lady's residence. He was admitted by the same grey-haired serving man who had opened the door on a former occasion, and who now ushered him into one of the parlors: and while awaiting the appearance of her whom he sought, he had leisure to cast an inquisitive glance around those spacious apartments where everything plainly bespoke wealth and taste. He had not been seated many seconds when a light footstep was heard approaching, and the next moment a young and lovely girl clad in mourning, and apparently about nineteen years of age, entered and advanced toward him. In another instant she stood by his side, and eagerly extending to him her hand, raised a pair of dark, expressive eyes now half suffused with tears to his face, while with eloquent words she faltered forth her deep gratitude to him who had preserved her from an early and fearful doom! Completely bewildered at the knowledge that he had indeed saved the life of that beautiful being, Edgar Hastings scarcely knew how to reply. All his wonted self-possession had forsaken him—and he could only stammer out a few disconnected sentences expressive of the small value of the obligation she had incurred. The young lady did not seem to notice his embarrassment, but taking a seat quite near she endeavored to draw him into conversation, and there was a winning frankness in her manner that soon set him at ease, while he listened with unaffected interest to a brief detail of her history, which as she smilingly and yet gravely said she must give him in order to clear herself of the stain which now rested upon her character, as having attempted suicide.

And so, gentle reader, leaving them together,

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hearken to me for a few minutes, while as concisely as possible I breathe into your ear a sketch of the self-same life tale which yon fair lady of my story is now repeating to her preserver.

The father of Rosalie Grahame was the only child of a very wealthy merchant of Boston. Arthur Grahame had been educated for the bar, but his health being rather infirm he had never practised his profession. Just before he completed his majority the death of his parent placed him in possession of an immense estate, which the feebleness of his frame rendered him unable to enjoy. In hopes of benefitting his constitution, which was naturally robust, though now broken down by close confinement to his studies, he left his native city soon after the decease of his father, and set forth on a protracted tour through southern Europe, as the physicians had declared travel was of great service to his health. The mild climes that he visited restored strength to his body, while the various changes of scene which constantly met his gaze did much toward dissipating the cloud that hung over the mind of young Grahame, caused by the unexpected death of a beloved parent, and a sense of utter loneliness which pervaded his spirit—for, strange to say, Arthur Grahame claimed kindred to no human being. He was the last surviving descendant of a large family, whose various branches had all long since been numbered with earth's departed.

Grahame had been about two years abroad, when during a sojourn at Rome he formed a friendship with an Italian noble of decayed fortunes, in whose family he soon became a frequent guest. With the haughty daughters of the Conte di Francia he was an acknowledged favorite—but it was not the Syren smile of the Lady Giulia, nor the condescending attentions of the stately Lady Laura, who to the untitled and uncoronetted was generally as cold as the silver moonbeams that stole nightly into her chamber, that made the dwelling of their father a pleasant resort to the young American. No—even while the younger daughter of the Conte strove to win him to herself by her dainty sweetness, and the elder cast aside her dignity and suffered her haughty spirit to feel the influence of his presence—the thoughts of Grahame were far from both, and his eyes often wandered toward a pale, dark-eyed girl, who usually sat alone and unnoticed in a distant corner of the apartment, occupied with her needle or a book. She was the orphan niece of the Conte—the child of his younger brother, who after the death of her father had sought protection beneath her uncle's roof. Therese di Francia was very beautiful—the most critical gaze could detect no fault in face or form—but upon that sweet countenance ever rested an expression of hopeless sadness, while her manner was always reserved and apparently cold. She never mingled with the crowd that daily met at the Conte's, but sat apart from all, seeming purposely to shun the society of those around her. The world called her proud and devoid of feeling, and despairing of awaking her notice left her to herself. They did not know that her relatives, fearing the effects of their niece's superior beauty upon the admirers of their own stately daughters, had, therefore, commanded her as she valued their smile to hold herself aloof from the gay and courtly multitude that thronged their halls. Arthur Grahame had ever regarded Therese with interest. He could not believe her really cold-hearted, as it was said, while her strange beauty and the striking grace of her every movement were day after day watched by him with sensations he had never experienced before. He had observed the chilling demeanor of her aunt and cousins toward the young orphan: often had his cheeks glowed with generous indignation as he noted some slight word or act by which Therese was reminded of her dependent situation; and instinct whispered to him a tale of long continued trials, by which the young girl was taught to bow in submission to the will of her oppressors—like the lowly violet meekly hiding beneath some overshadowing shrub whose gaudy blossoms thus receive a double portion of sunshine and dew-drops. And next arose a wish in Grahame's heart that to him might be allotted the task of unveiling to the world the rare loveliness of that modest flower; and he resolved, if it were possible, to win the love of Therese and take her with him to his own native land, to be the light of his now desolate mansion. But he felt that this object could only be accomplished with caution—for were the Conte's family to observe his preference for the orphan they would doubtless do all in their power to keep her out of his way.

Many times when Therese went forth to walk, Arthur Grahame met her as if by accident, and accompanied her on her journey, which was very often one of mercy to the abodes of the suffering and needy. Need it be told how by degrees his respectful attentions won her confidence, and she learned to regard him as far different from the glittering throng with whom she had all her life been in contact? One circumstance alone served to bind him more closely to her than any other. Their religious sect was the same. Though the Conte and his household were devotees at the gorgeous shrine of St. Peter's, Therese never accompanied them. Her mother

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was an English woman, and at her dying request her daughter had been educated in the beautiful faith of the Church of England. Grahame also was a Protestant—and thus arose between the two an oft-expressed sympathy. Therese never divulged the fact of their frequent meetings to her relatives, and Grahame was wise enough to maintain a like silence. When at last the latter breathed into the fair girl's ear his impassioned avowal of affection, it was answered by Therese with a timid confession of preference, and in those few low sentences there was a depth, a fervor that almost startled Grahame, so different did he find the beautiful speaker from what she had been represented to him.

And now came the question, how should the truth of their engagement be made known to the Count—and when it was, would he consent to their union? Grahame feared much opposition, for he well knew that the Conte's daughters would endeavor by every means to influence their parent; and Therese thought the same, though she did not give her reasons—for she had too high a sense of honor to speak ill of her cousins when she deemed her betrothed ignorant of their real character. But Grahame now thought it necessary to reveal his knowledge upon this subject, and then he divulged to Therese a plan, by following which, the difficulties they dreaded might be avoided. He urged her to marry him secretly, and told her that within an hour after their union they might be safely esconced within a gallant barque on their way toward the home of his birth: and Therese listened with glowing cheeks, and in the end gave her promise to act as he desired.

The project was fulfilled—and when the morning after their marriage the escape of Therese was discovered, and a note was found lying upon her dressing-table, announcing that she had wedded Arthur Grahame, and was now far out of the reach of pursuit; words could ill depict the astonishment and anger of her uncle and his family. By the Conte's daughters the disappointment produced by their favorite's union with their cousin was deeply felt—but it passed away by the end of a month, and had merely the effect of causing Lady Giulia to bestow her smiles elsewhere, and of leading Lady Laura to look with grander scorn than before upon all those who possessed not the patent of nobility.

Grahame and his bride arrived in due time at the place of their destination. It is not my purpose to linger upon the period of their wedded life. Suffice it to say that at the end of twelve years Arthur Grahame found himself a widower and the father of two interesting little girls. Therese had never enjoyed good health since her arrival in the country of her adoption. She drooped beneath the influence of the variable climate of the north, and yet firmly resisted her husband's wish that they should return to Italy. "No, Arthur, no," she would invariably say in answer to his entreaties—"in this fair land of yours have I experienced years of the heart's brightest happiness—here it was that you, my soul's idol, first looked on life—this is the birthplace of my little ones—and it is here also that I would be buried."

She died—and there was a manly heart and two innocent, motherless children left behind to mourn her loss. After his wife's decease Grahame never mixed with society, and seemed to live only for his little daughters, Rosalie and Therese. In consequence of their father's secluded habits they were brought up in retirement, and had but little acquaintance with the word. Rosalie, at her mother's death had just entered her tenth year, and her sister was two years younger. Eight years later, these young sisters stood by the death bed of their father, who consigned his children to the guardianship of a friend, an eminent lawyer in Boston. The loss of their sole-surviving parent was mourned with bitter sorrow by the orphans—and the effect of that sudden stroke was in the main fatal to the younger. Therese Grahame was a fragile, sensitive being, singularly beautiful and gifted, but all too delicate to bear up under the burden of life's vicissitudes. Incessant grief at her father's death preyed upon both mind and body, and ere the expiration of another twelvemonth, Rosalie bent in frantic anguish over the cold corpse of her darling sister. Rosalie Grahame was now alone. There was no kindred voice to soothe her in that hour of deep agony—no kindred heart on which to lean for consolation and support. What wonder if that fearful knowledge should have cast her upon the bed of sickness and danger? What wonder if when in the hour of delirium the memory of her loneliness pressed upon her soul, she should in the wildness of temporary insanity have endeavored to rid herself of a life from whose pathway all the flowers had withered?

Such was the substance of Rosalie Grahame's narrative to Hastings, and as such, reader mine, I have presented it to your view.

Edgar Hastings had heard that simple detail with varied feelings—and when he listened to the touching words in which she described her desolate situation the blood rushed to his brow, and his heart beat wildly with a thousand new and strange emotions. It seemed to him as though he had known Rosalie for years; and

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after she had concluded her history he revealed to her a portion of his own, spoke of the reverses of fortune under which he had suffered, and dwelt long and affectionately upon the beauty and virtues of his sister. He did not mention their extreme poverty: no—in spite of the determination which he had previously made, now that he discovered in the fair girl at his side the lady whom he had rescued, he felt he could not do as he had resolved.

When at length he rose to depart, Rosalie Grahame again and again uttered her fervent expressions of gratitude for the life he had saved.

"And now, Mr. Hastings, you will come and see me sometimes—will you not?" she said, gazing earnestly into his face, and placing her soft, little hand confidingly within his own, "I have but few friends, and wished to see you that I might number you upon my list."

As Hastings returned home he thought much upon Miss Grahame's last words, and asked himself whether it would be expedient for one as portionless as himself to be brought often into contact with a young girl so beautiful and far above himself in worldly goods. Would not friendship, he questioned, eventually lead to a warmer feeling?—nay, was he not already greatly interested in Rosalie Grahame, more even than he dared to confess to himself? Yes, in that single interview he had felt that were he in a situation to marry, Rosalie was all that his fancy had ever pictured in a wife. And how thinking thus could he suffer himself to comply with her wish—to accept her friendship at the risk of his own happiness? It could not be—he must fly from the magic of her presence and endeavor to forget that she existed.

The circumstances of his interview with Miss Grahame were related to his sister with but few comments on his part. Eva too heard him without remark—for when he spoke of the extreme loveliness of Rosalie, she thought of the effect which that beauty must have produced upon her brother, and with tact peculiar only to the softer sex entered fully into his feelings.

A fortnight again passed away. Edgar Hastings was true to his determination of avoiding Miss Grahame. Since the evening of their first interview he had not been near her, but she was often in his thoughts, and his self-denial required a painful effort. His attempts to gain employment had been as usual unattended with success, and he was on the point of resigning all hope, when one morning a note was presented to him, which, on opening, he found to be from a well known barrister, requesting his presence at his office as soon as he could make it convenient to come. As may be imagined, Hastings was not long in obeying the summons, and accordingly shortly after its reception set out for the lawyer's apartments.

The result of that visit was a happy one to Edgar Hastings. Mr. Eldron, the barrister, was a fine looking old man, courteous, dignified and gentlemanly in manner. He seemed pleased with Edgar's appearance, and told him that his object in sending for him was that he was about giving up the most laborious part of his business, and while inquiring for some one able to supply his place, had heard Mr. Edgar Hastings recommended as precisely the person likely to suit him. He added that if Edgar would allow him to prove his qualifications, and if the prospect pleased the latter, and their terms agreed, he should be glad to avail himself of his assistance. The young man expressed himself perfectly willing to undergo the test—while in his heart he felt that the remuneration exceeded his highest expectations. Two hours afterward Edgar Hastings left the lawyer's office with the happy consciousness that the long-wished for opportunity for the exercise of his capacities was now ensured to him.

His first thought was to return home and impart to Eva the joyful intelligence; and that impulse was promptly obeyed. As he approached the apartment where he usually found his sister seated at the work-table, he heard voices in earnest conversation within, and pausing a moment to listen, his ear caught tones that were certainly not quite unfamiliar to it. The next instant he noiselessly unclosed the door, and in a distant corner of the apartment, side by side, sat Eva Hastings and Rosalie Grahame conversing together with the freedom of old friends, while the arm of the lovely stranger affectionately encircled the sister of Edgar Hastings! The moment they perceived the latter's entrance both of the young girls started up, and Rosalie advanced toward him and extended her hand, while a slight flush suffused her fair cheek.

"And so, Mr. Hastings," she said reproachfully, as he expressed his pleasure at again meeting her—"and so you really deemed that because you chose to forsake me I would think proper to return the compliment. But I can assure you such has never been my intention—and I have come here to-day for the express purpose of giving you a richly deserved scolding, and of proving that I humble myself in every possible manner for the sake of showing you that I am not at all likely to be ungrateful for the service you so lately rendered me." There was a slight dash of emotion in her voice, but mastering it she continued—

"You will doubtless think my visit here a

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very bold and unlady-like proceeding—but it is founded entirely on my inability to brook disappointment. I had set my heart on gaining you for a friend, and had not the least idea of relinquishing my desire. The encomiums which at our first interview you lavished upon your sister, also made me eagerly long to behold her—so I resolved to seek your abode and see what the most strenuous efforts could accomplish. In one undertaking have I already succeeded, for this lovely Eva," and as she spoke she drew the latter still nearer to her, "has promised to favor me with her sweet friendship."

For a considerable while longer did Rosalie Grahame remain with the inmates of that humble dwelling, conversing with Edgar and Eva with all the familiarity of old acquaintanceship; but at last the information that her carriage was at the door, warned her that it was time to return home.

One morning about two years after the instalment of Edgar Hastings into the office of Lawyer Eldron, a crowded audience was assembled in a court-room at Boston, and with rapt attention they listened to the words of burning power which fell from the lips of a youthful member of the bar. He was pleading the cause of an aged widow, whose estate had been wrenched from her possession through the craft of those in whom she had ever placed the holiest confidence; and while the glowing words in which he portrayed her wrongs flowed freely forth, there was a death-like silence among that vast multitude, for seldom had such a strain of golden eloquence echoed through that spacious apartment, and all who listened anxiously caught each word, unwilling to lose even the slightest murmur. It was indeed a powerful appeal, and as such the judges felt it. When at length the speaker ceased and resumed his seat, huge drops of perspiration stood upon his brow—while one dense shout of applause rose from the enraptured throng, and at the same time a wreath of graceful laurels fell to the feet of the youthful orator, and looking hastily up he met the gaze of a beautiful girl who was seated in the gallery above him. The glance which he returned revealed to Rosalie Grahame that one transient token of her approbation was of far more value to Edgar Hastings than all the adulation by which it was evident he was henceforth to be surrounded.

The following evening found Hastings seated beside the fair maiden who had so plainly evinced her joy at his triumph. A quiet happiness beamed upon the countenance of each, and they spoke hopefully of the future, and of the blissful years which were in store for them.

"And now, dearest Rosalie," said the young barrister, as his gaze rested upon the bright face of his lady love, "let me own my knowledge of a secret which you have long kept locked within the recesses of your soul. Let me confess to you that it is to yourself alone I owe the abundant harvest which I have this day reaped—for it is but to-day that I have discovered in my venerated patron, Mr. Eldron, the guardian to whose care your father entrusted you. Through him I learned how you contrived to acquaint yourself with my greatly reduced circumstances, and how, at your solicitation, he consented to receive me into his office. Ah! dearest, I fear I can never repay either your guardian or yourself for your unparalleled goodness."

"Nay, say not so," replied Rosalie, placing her hand gently within his, "your obligation to *me* was repaid long before you incurred it; and as to Mr. Eldron, he ought to consider himself highly favored in being able to boast that he was the means of presenting so brilliant a luminary as yourself to the world. And this I am very well aware that he does, for many times have I heard him exclaim that he would always bless the hour when Edgar Hastings first became the assistant of his labors."

About three weeks afterward Rosalie Grahame was united to Edgar Hastings, and at the same time also his sister Eva, now a blooming and animated being, stood before the altar as a bride.

Through the long years succeeding their union the wife of Edgar Hastings never had the slightest cause to regret her choice, while she was often heard laughingly to declare that since she had the honor of being acquainted with him, her husband had never thwarted her wish but once, which was on the memorable occasion that first introduced to his notice his own wilful Rosalie.

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THE ORPHAN BOY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CRUIZING IN THE LAST WAR."

"He faded, yet so calm and meek,
So gently wan, so sweetly weak."

THE bustle of the fight was over; the prisoners had been secured; the decks washed down; the watch piped; and the schooner had once more relapsed into midnight quiet and repose. I sought my hammock and soon fell asleep. But my slumbers were disturbed by wild dreams, which, like the visions of a fever, agitated and unnerved me: the late strife, the hardships of my early life, and a thousand other things mingling together as figures in a phantasmagoria. Suddenly a hand was laid on my shoulder, and starting up I beheld the surgeon's mate.

"Little Dick, sir, is dying," he said.

At once I sprang from my hammock. Little Dick was a sort of protegee of mine. He was a pale, delicate child, said to be an orphan and used to gentle nurture; and from the first hour I joined the schooner my heart had yearned toward him, for I too had once been friendless and alone in the world. He often talked to me in confidence of his mother, whose memory he regarded with a holy reverence. With the other boys of the ship he had little to say; for they were rude and coarse, he delicate and sensitive. Often, when they jeered him for his melancholy, he would go apart by himself and weep. He never complained of his lot, though his companions imposed on him continually. Poor lad! his heart was in the grave with his lost parents.

I took a strange interest in him, and had lightened his tasks as much as possible. During the late fight I had owed my life to him, for he rushed in just as a sabre stroke was levelled at me: and by interposing his feeble cutlass had averted the deadly blow. In the hurry and confusion since I had quite forgotten to enquire if he was hurt, though, at the time, I had inwardly resolved to exert all my little influence to procure him a midshipman's warrant in requital for his service. It was with a pang of reproachful agony, therefore, that I leapt to my feet—

"My God!" I exclaimed, "you do not mean it? He is not dying?"

"I fear, sir," said the messenger, shaking his head sadly, "that he cannot live till morning."

"And I have been lying idly here!" I exclaimed with remorse. "Lead me to him."

"He is delirious, but in the intervals of lunacy he asks for you, sir," and as the man spoke we stood by the bedside of the dying boy.

The sufferer did not lie in his usual hammock, for it was hung in the very midst of the crew, and the close air around it was too stifling, but he had been carried under the open hatchway, and laid there in a little open space of about four feet square. From the sound of the ripples I judged the schooner was in motion, while the clear, calm blue sky, seen through the opening overhead, and dotted with myriads of stars, betokened that the fog had broken away. How calmly it smiled down on the wan face of the dying boy. Occasionally a light current of wind —oh! how deliciously cool in that pent-up hold —eddied down the hatchway, and lifted the dark chestnut locks of the sufferer, as, with his little head reposing in the lap of an old veteran, he lay in an unquiet slumber. His shirt-collar was unbuttoned, and his childish bosom, as white as that of a girl, was open and exposed. He breathed quick and heavily. The wound of which he was dying, had been intensely painful, but within the last half hour had somewhat lulled, though even now his thin fingers tightly grasped the bed-clothes as if he suffered the greatest agony.

A battle-stained and gray-haired seaman stood beside him, holding a dull lantern in his hand, and gazing sorrowfully down upon the sufferer. The surgeon knelt with his finger on the boy's pulse. As I approached they all looked up. The veteran who held him shook his head, and would have spoken, but the tears gathered too chokingly in his eyes.

The surgeon said—

"He is going fast—poor little follow—do you see this?" and as he spoke he lifted up a rich gold locket, which had lain upon the boy's breast. "He has seen better days."

I could not answer, for my heart was full. Here was the being to whom, but a few hours before, I had owed my life—a poor, slight, unprotected child—lying before me, with death already written on his brow—and yet I had never known of his danger, and never sought him out after the conflict. How bitterly my heart reproached me in that hour. They noticed my agitation, and his old friend—the seaman that held his head—said sadly.

"Poor little Dick—you'll never see the shore you have wished for so long. But there'll be more than one—when your log's out," he spoke with emotion—"to mourn over you."

Suddenly the little fellow opened his eyes, and gazed vacantly around.

"Has he come yet?" he asked in a low voice. "Why won't he come?"

"I am here," said I, taking the little fellow's hand, "don't you know me, Dick?"

He smiled faintly in my face. Then he said,

"You have been kind to me, sir—kinder than most people are to a poor orphan boy. I have

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no way to show my gratitude—unless you will take the Bible you'll find in my trunk. It's a small offering, I know, but it is all I have."

I burst into tears: he resumed.

"Doctor, I am dying, ain't I?" said the little fellow, "for my sight grows dim. God bless you, Mr. Danforth."

"Can I do nothing for you, Dick?" said I, "you saved my life. I would coin my own blood to buy yours."

"I have nothing to ask—I don't want to live—only if it's possible, let me buried by my mother—you will find the name of the place, and all about it, in my trunk."

"Anything—everything, my poor lad," I answered chokingly.

The little fellow smiled faintly—it was like an angel's smile—but he did not answer. His eyes were fixed on the stars flickering in that patch of blue sky far overhead. His mind wandered.

"It is a long—long way up there—but there are bright angels among them. Mother used to say that I would meet her there. How near they come, and I see sweet faces smiling on me from them. Hark! is that music?" and, lifting his finger, he seemed listening intently for a moment. He fell back; and the old veteran burst into tears. The child was dead. Did he indeed hear angels' voices? God grant it.

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KISSING ONE'S COUSIN.
BY C. J. PETERSON.
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KISSING ONE'S COUSIN.

BY C. J. PETERSON.

"KISSING is a very pleasant amusement," said my friend Tom sententiously, looking up from a roaring grate-fire—commend me to a grate-fire, for it materially assists the imagination in keeping warm!—"a very pleasant amusement in any shape, but, bless you, sir, there's no kissing like kissing one's cousin."

Two minutes before, we had been talking of the agrarian laws of ancient Rome. From the eternal city Tom had come down, in a clear leap over two thousand years, to kissing his cousin. It was too much for me, and I burst into laughter.

"I'll tell you how it was," said Tom, a little warmly, for he guessed what I was laughing at. "You had said that there was small fear in this country of witnessing extreme wealth on the part of the few, and extreme poverty on the part of the many as in Rome of old, and Ireland now, and the reason for it was that we had so much unoccupied land to serve as an outlet for surplus population. That led me to think of the great West where I once spent some years—that reminded me of the cause that drove me there, which was connected with a pretty cousin—and then I recalled to mind what delicious times I used to have kissing her. So, now, what are you laughing at?"

Tom was as fierce as a Bengal tiger. Accordingly I assumed great meekness and drew down the corners of my mouth, looking straight into the fire.

"Yes!" he continued, now under full swing—for Tom, like a steam-engine, was good for nothing till he got warmed up—"yes, I've seen a good deal of kissing in my life time, but there's nothing like kissing one's cousin. Other girls fight, or scream, or pout, or grow sullen, but a cousin always takes it half coyly, half kindly. And then they blush so! Egad, sir, I've been used to kissing from a child. I remember when I went to school—a little, sandy-haired, big-pated shaver—with a head full of mischief and a pocket full of nuts—I always had some blue-eyed favorite to whom I gave a kiss and a ginger-bread as regularly as I ate my breakfast. There were two sweet little angels who sat, one on each side of me in school, and when the mistress turned her back I'd first kiss one, and then, at the next chance, the other, for if I didn't keep even, there was the deuce to pay. It was a nice matter to hold the balance—but then, sir, was the excitement of it. God bless that old moss-covered school-house!"

"What will come next?" thought I. "Tom is going off into the heroics." But I sat demure and silent.

Tom breathed himself a minute, and then started off afresh, like a locomotive from a water-station.

"There's a deal more in the manner than in the matter of a kiss," he said, quite profoundly. "I would not give a button to kiss an ugly mouth, or to kiss in company. No, no—to be prized, a kiss must cost some trouble—one must generalize a little—break ground cautiously and at a distance, then gradually approach, lull the garrison into security, and carry it by a *coup de main* at last. How I used to love, in the summer evenings when the old folks were napping in one corner, to get their daughter in another, and there, all in the dark, kiss her so deliciously—the fun of it being that she dared not say a word lest the noise should wake them up and show what a pickle she was in. That's kissing for you! Or to play Blindman's Buff, and when the prettiest of the party had to have her eyes covered, offer to do it for her, and take a kiss slyly for toll. Or to go apple-gathering, and as soon as your little partner's apron was full and she couldn't resist, to put your arm around her and kiss her at a word. Ah! there's nothing like the purity, the freshness, the single-heartedness of youth. As we grow older, sir, we get conventional—and even the ladies lose their innocent, heaven-born modesty, assuming in its place the forwardness of the hoyden or the affectation of the prude. Modesty is the sweetest virtue of woman, and so Satan counterfeits it when the pure coin is lost.

"I had a little cousin—she was the most modest of her sex—and though I kissed every body else, I did not dare to kiss her. A hundred times I resolved on it, but somehow or other, when it came to the point, I always felt awed. Other girls even kissed me, but she wouldn't have done such a thing, if all the prophets from Moses down had implored her on their knees. I don't know how it was—I saw other cousins kissing and being kissed—but it wasn't my lucky fate. Kiss *me!*—she would sooner have died.

"Well, boys must grow to be men—except sometimes when they grow to be dandies—and so, in course of time, I was no longer a child, but a youth just out of college. I had not seen

NOTE.—This sketch appeared, substantially the same as now, in the "Casket," several years ago. It may seem useless, therefore, to reprint it. But probably most of our readers will find it new to them. Besides, as it was published anonymously, several individuals kindly appropriated it to themselves in print; hence the author presents it under his own name, thinking, like the man who was bound to the pillory, that "if there is any fun going, it is a pity he should not have his share."

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my pretty cousin for a year, but now, instead of visiting her, I set off for the West, for we had quarrelled the last time we met, and I vowed I would forget her. I was gone two years. Yet, try all I could, I found it impossible to drive Ellen from my thoughts. She was so modest, so pure, so gentle—I really thought more of her than of all the world beside! And then I was continually recalling how I used to kiss her! We had quarrelled because she would not kiss me, which I, pert from college, had insisted on, pleading the example of all cousins: but she was inflexible, and so I at last grew angry. My anger finally cooled down, however, and I resolved to go back and see her. In fact, all the time, I had been visiting my spite on myself—a thing, they tell me, people in love are very apt to do!

"I resolved to surprise her. So, without writing to announce my purpose, I set out. Luckily, my good uncle was absent when I arrived, no one being at home, a strange servant girl said, except Miss Ellen. Refusing to send up my name, I sat waiting my cousin's appearance, wondering into what sort of a woman she had grown.

"Directly I heard a light foot coming along the hall, and my heart began to jump quick, quicker, until at last it got up into my throat, almost choking me. The door opened and Ellen glided in noiselessly, a perfect sylph! Heavens! what a transformation. I had left her scarcely thirteen, a mere girl—she was now seventeen, a woman, yet almost too ethereal for that. She was clothed in simple white, with a single moss-rose bud in her bosom. She hastily advanced into the room, expecting, no doubt, to see a beggar, as no name had been sent up, but when she beheld a gentleman, and a strange one too, she started like a timid fawn and stood still, her cheeks dyed in blushes, and her bosom palpitating under the light cambric as if it were a breathing snow-drift.

"'Ellen!' I said.

"My voice acted like magic. 'Why, coz,' she cried, darting forward and extending both hands: then suddenly she stopped, blushed again and looked down embarrassed. By this time I had seized her hand, and trembling all over, I kissed her cheek. In a moment she recovered from her confusion, pushed me away archly, and, holding me at arm's length, vowed I had grown as tall as a flag-staff, and as sun-burnt and ugly as a Turk. I replied with a laugh to hide my offended vanity, and would have kissed her again, but she slyly glided from me, and at that instant my uncle popped in. To be caught kissing his daughter, and I twenty-two! Did you ever feel simple?—be found then in such a predicament.

"Of course I was daily with my cousin. She was positively the most provoking creature I had ever known—gay, witty, full of mischief, a perfect torment, yet so bewitching! She was always teasing one, yet, if she chose, she could talk so charmingly. The old pastor used to love, he said, to get beside her and enjoy a good rational chat now and then. But with her beaux —and their name was legion—she was a perfect little vixen, doing and saying what she pleased, and worrying them half to death. Me she teased worse than all. Twice a day I was on the point of quarrelling with her, but always at the crisis some smile or word would make me her slave again—the little witch!

"Now and then, when I felt saucy, I threatened to make her kiss me. How she laughed, holding up her finger! 'Kiss such a shocking looking fellow, even though he is a cousin!' she cried, and then she would dance out of the room, stopping at the door to kiss her hand to me, and off like a bird, carolling as gaily. Sometimes she would surprise me lying on the sofa half asleep, when she would vow she wanted a new pair of gloves, but couldn't think of winning them by kissing a face as hairy as a chimpanzee monkey's! And somehow her little red mouth would pout so prettily as she said this, that, more than once, I leaped from my seat and chased her until she locked herself in the greenhouse. And there she would stand, tapping the window-pane with her finger, the provoking minx!

"At first I thought myself not a bit in love—poor dunce, I'd been in love from a boy! We were always together, and nobody thought any thing of it—neither did I, nor she, I suppose—for we were *only cousins* as folks said. Ah! these cousins are always playing the deuce with each others hearts. They are forever untangling silk together, or reading the last new poem, or studying botany, or doing some other nonsense *in a cousinly way*. You let them take long walks in the summer moonlight—or ride for hours alone on a golden autumn afternoon—or sleigh by starlight so cozily—and all this time when they are just budding into life, and fall in love as naturally as one goes to sleep. Often, too, you throw them together purposely:—its so convenient to let cousin Jack beau the girls about, while you sit comfortably at home. Ah! blind old fool. I've two daughters myself—young slips of things yet—but when they grow up, look out! No cousin comes palavering about my house with his flute and his familiarity, or if he does, I'll either make up my mind at

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once to have him for a son-in-law, or else kick the young rascal neck and heels down the door-steps. Cousins indeed!

"But now the time came for me to return—I had my fortune yet to make, and this was not the way to achieve anything toward it. So I told my uncle: but he only smiled. I told Ellen: strange to stay, she turned pale and was silent, though her tongue had been going like a mill-wheel, and as musically. 'What in the world took me away?' she said. 'Oh! I was poor and the West was the place to get rich. I had my way to make alone in the world.' She raised her blue eyes to mine with a sudden look, half reproachful, half inquiring; then she turned them away as quickly and spoke of something else: but after this there was a constraint on all parties for the rest of the evening.

"Among her beaux was a young lawyer, rich like herself, and, therefore, as everybody said, an excellent match. All the gossips of both sexes—for gossips *are* of both sexes—declared Ellen would be, sooner or later, Mrs. Thornton. I used sometimes to try to tease her about him, but never could succeed. One day, however, after I had spoken of my approaching departure, she declared pettishly that Thornton was nothing to *her*. I teased her a second time about him: she denied being pleased with him, and grew absolutely worried that I wouldn't believe her. I had never before seen her so earnest: it was new to me to feel I had any power over her; and I must confess I was vain of the discovery and made the most of it. Somehow or other—in what way I cannot exactly tell—I began to suspect at last that Ellen and I might be in love with each other. My own case was pretty evident, when I began to analyze matters, but Ellen was a more difficult problem to read. She was both shy and confiding—cousinly and embarrassed—one day all kindness, the next all Thornton. She was like a whiskey punch—only those things have gone out of fashion—sour and sweet, spirit and water, a mixture of contraries! We men—let us once fancy a girl loves us—get as vain as puppies; and at last, the suspicion that Ellen liked me growing stronger, I began to test her. I admired carelessly the cape on a girl's shoulder—for I abominate bare shoulders—and lo! very speedily Ellen had just such a cape. I praised the color of a ribbon: she met me the next day with a duplicate. And yet I don't think she was conscious of it. She would have died if she thought I had noticed it. But how every nerve in me thrilled at these little evidences of affection! What a world of happiness opened to my dreaming imagination!

"And yet I might be mistaken, I reflected. What proofs of affection had I received, except such as vanity might misrepresent? I was as proud as Lucifer, else I would have spoken out, but the possibility of being refused galled my haughty soul: and besides Ellen was an heiress, and how dare I fancy she would stoop to my lot! You have been in love yourself perhaps—your quiet people usually are in love—and so you can form some idea of the torments of suspense I suffered.

"It was now the last night but one I had to remain. I had always lodged at the village inn, in spite of the remonstrances of my uncle, though I compromised matters by spending most of the day at his house; and now I was on the point of taking leave for the evening. It was a most lovely night. The moon poured a flood of radiance over the landscape without, and transmuted the river before us into silver. What an hour for tender thoughts! My cousin looked pensive, and I felt sentimental myself.

"'I shall be very busy to-morrow,' I said, 'and I don't know that I can get up here in the evening.'

"She raised her dark blue eyes to mine, her whole soul melting through them.

"'Why not?' she said. 'Are *we* not always glad to see you?'

"I was piqued at that word *we:* so I answered indifferently. 'Oh! I heard Thornton ask you to go out with him.'

"'There goes *that* Thornton again,' she cried, 'I declare you are too provoking—you know what I think of him.'

"'Ah!—but why make engagements the night I am going away?'

"'But I did not—' she said quickly: then she made a sudden stop.

"'He's very rich,' I said sententiously.

"'And do *I* care for that?' she said reproachfully.

"'Well, good-bye,' I said, 'I shall have a world of things to do, yet I will come and see you—that is if you really care about the visit.'

"'Now, Tom!' she said.

"'But lest anything should happen,' I continued, taking her hand. 'You'll kiss me now—a parting kiss?'

"'Indeed I wont!' she cried saucily, springing back.

"'Indeed you will,' I said boldly.

"'Indeed, in very deed, Mr. Impertinence, I won't!' and she tapped her tiny foot on the floor, pouting out her pretty lip.

"'It's your duty!' said I.

"A funny smile began to flicker around the corners of her mouth.

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"'I can prove it!' cried I.

"'Indeed, Mr. Wiseacre?' and she smiled half maliciously, half incredulously.

"'Do unto others as you would wish to be done unto!'

"She burst into a merry laugh. 'Well, really, I don't know what to praise most—your impudence, or your wit.' The last word she emphasized ironically.

"I looked at the river and sighed. I took out my gloves, I began to pull them on; still not a word was said. At last I rose slowly.

"'Good-bye!' I spoke half sadly.

"'You'll be here to-morrow night?' she said persuasively.

"'You *really* wish it?'

"'How can you doubt it?' she replied warmly.

"'I shall interrupt a tete-a-tete with Mr. Thornton!'

"'Pshaw!—Mr. Thornton again,' she answered pettishly.

"We stood a moment in silence: at last I heard a low, half-suppressed sigh.

"'You won't grant my boon. If now it was to mend Mr. Thornton's glove——'

"She made an impatient movement: but directly said—'how *can* you think I care for him?'

"'How can I? You do fifty things for him: you will do nothing for me.'

"'Cousin!'

"'I ask the smallest favor—you have refused it,' my voice sank as I spoke, and I took her hand, 'you are very unfair, Ellen.'

"'Why?' said she, lifting her blue eye until its gaze thrilled me. 'Why?' and her voice shook a little.

"'Because you refuse what I have just asked for—a simple boon—a trifle.'

"'You are serious?'

"I answered by a look. Her eye fell, and her hand trembled in mine. She looked out on the lawn with a sigh. Perhaps she thought of my going away, and forever, when she breathed that sigh—perhaps—perhaps:—it was a hard struggle—love, cousinship and maidenly reserve all speaking—and yet she knew it not! Once she stole a look at me, then timidly turned away. She stood with her finger irresolutely on her lip, the snowy muslin over her bosom rising and falling.

"'And you really think me unfair.'

"'Ellen,' I said, I spoke as if deeply hurt, and half letting go her hand, I turned partially away.

"Just as I did so, a cloud had come across the moon, and the room, for the moment, was buried in deep shadow. Suddenly I heard a sigh that seemed to come from the bottom of my cousin's heart, I felt a breath like a zephyr across my face, and a light touch of lips, like a rose-leaf, was on my brow. I had conquered. But a hot tear-drop fell on my face. The mystery of her feelings was suddenly revealed to her—she burst into sobs and fell on my shoulder. My heart smote me bitterly for her momentary agony. I drew her tenderly to me and told my long concealed passion. For some time she did not seem to heed me, but sobbed as if her heart would break. Gradually, however, she grew soothed, yet her face still lay hidden on my bosom. I pressed her silently to my heart while a gush of holy feeling swept over me. Five minutes, or it might be half an hour thus passed, for I could keep no note of time. At last I whispered.

"'Ellen!'

"She lifted her blue eyes timidly from my shoulder.

"'Will you come to-morrow night?' was all she said.

—

"And what followed?" I cried, for Tom, at this point, provokingly ceased, and began to poke the fire abstractedly.

"What followed?" I reiterated, giving him a shake.

He looked up in blank astonishment.

"What followed?"

"Why! a Mrs. Tom Spencer to be sure!" was all he said.

And with that he began to poke the fire again very composedly.

Now Tom's wife is named Ellen, but then Tom has a propensity to tell long stories which he invents as he goes along, and sometimes he gets to believe them himself. It's very possible he was quizzing me in his quiet way.

What do you think, reader?

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THE SECOND WIFE.
BY MISS LOUISE OLIVIA HUNTER.
Ladies' National Magazine (1843-1848); Oct 1847; VOL. XII., No. 4.; American Periodicals
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THE SECOND WIFE.

BY MISS LOUISE OLIVIA HUNTER.

"Better confide, and be deceived
A thousand times by treacherous foes
Than once accuse the innocent,
Or let suspicion mar repose."

About three years since I received an invitation to examine a fine collection of paintings, which were to be open for the inspection of visitors for a few days previous to their disposal at public auction. Being remarkably fond of pictures, as may be supposed I hesitated not to take advantage of this chance of beholding some which were represented as extremely choice; and accordingly at the earliest opportunity set forth on the proposed expedition.

The room where the paintings were stationed was situated at but a short distance from my residence. What was my surprise on entering to find myself the sole inmate of that spacious apartment, which I had expected to behold thronged with those, who, like myself, were admirers of the beautiful. The collection was indeed a rare one, far exceeding even my highest anticipations, and for more than an hour I wandered from picture to picture, while each moment served but to increase my delight.

Suddenly my attention was attracted by the opening of the door of the apartment in which I stood, and I became aware that I was no longer its sole occupant. The new comer was a lady habited in deep mourning. Her face was concealed from view by a thick, black veil, which she did not draw aside until she had passed me, and advanced to the opposite side of the apartment; but there was something in her air and carriage, a mingling of grace and dignity, that at once struck my fancy, and I impatiently waited the moment when I might obtain a view of her features.

At length the stranger turned toward me, and my curious gaze rested upon a countenance that would have been faultlessly lovely but for its extreme paleness. Every feature was perfect, but an expression of sadness lingered about the mouth, and beamed from those dark, earnest, eloquent eyes. I knew not why it was, yet an idea instantly flashed across my mind that I had seen that face before. It seemed strangely familiar, yet I could in no manner account for the conviction that this was not the first time I had looked upon it. The longer I gazed the more intense grew my interest in the fair stranger, and I listened with a sensation of pain to the dry, hollow cough, which at periods racked her delicate frame. Suddenly the lady raised her eyes from a painting, which for some moments

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past had absorbed her attention, and, as they wandered round the room, they for the first time encountered mine. Involuntarily she started—in another instant advanced a step nearer to me, and then drew hastily back, while her cheek grew a shade paler than before, and she leaned heavily against a sofa for support. In alarm I hastened to her side, threw my arm around her, and led her to a seat.

"You are ill, madam," I said, in a tone of sympathy; "can I do anything to assist you?"

"Thank you—I am better now," she replied, with a strong effort re-calling her fast fleeting senses. The voice, though faint, was soft and sweetly musical, and it vibrated upon my heart as the tone of a half-remembered melody. Surely I had heard it before—yet when, or where?

In a few seconds more the lady was sufficiently recovered to explain the cause of her agitation, which she did by asserting my resemblance to a very dear friend whom she had not met for years.

"It is very strange," was my reply, "and yet it seems to me that this is not our first meeting. But I have tried in vain to re-call the circumstances of a previous one." She had listened attentively while I spoke, and when I paused, seizing both my hands, she looked eagerly into my face, and said almost breathlessly—

"Tell me—oh! tell me, is your name Annie M——?"

"That was my maiden name," I replied, in a tone of surprise; and scarcely had the words escaped me when the arms of the stranger were wound about my neck, while pressing her lips passionately to my cheek, she murmured forth, "Annie, dear, dear Annie, do you not remember your own Florence Leighton?"

And as that name fell upon my ears a thousand old memories came thronging back upon my heart; I glanced again upon the pale, sweet face before me, and, as I closely scanned each feature, became convinced that I indeed beheld the best-loved friend of my early youth. In another instant I had clasped the long-lost but unforgotten companion of my girlhood to my heart. Yes, it was in truth my own Florence Leighton, she whom I had thought of, dreamed of, talked of, and prayed for during the long years that had separated us. But she was greatly altered. Ten years before I had known her as a gay, beautiful and sunny-tempered girl—and it was not to be wondered at that I had failed to recognize in that pale, sad face and fragile form, the blooming and joyous maiden of sixteen, from whom I had then parted.

For many moments there was silence between us, for each heart was too full for utterance; but when we at length became sufficiently composed, Florence bade me explain why she had never heard from me during her stay abroad. She asserted that she had written letter after letter to me, but never received any answer—and when after her return home she had instituted inquiries concerning me at our native village, all she could learn was that I had married and removed to a distant city, but no one was able to tell her my exact destination. Much to her surprise, I replied that I had never received a single line from her since her departure, and had, therefore, supposed that she was either dead or had forgotten me. And then we spoke of much that had transpired during her absence—I told her of my happy marriage, and described my peaceful home, and the bright, glad faces that were ever ready to welcome me within its precincts. She listened silently, and when I had ceased, and begged her in return to give me a detail of her history since we parted, her eyes filled with tears, and the shadows deepened upon her brow. Sadly she glanced upon the mourning garb she wore, and I interpreted that glance truly—I understood that she too had been married, but that the chosen of her heart was no more an inhabitant of earth.

"It is a long, sad story," she replied, in a mournful tone, "and one too painful for me now to relate. I fear that I have undergone sufficient agitation for to-day, and my frame is not strong enough to bear much excitement. I would fain return to my abode as soon as possible—but come to me to-morrow, dearest Annie, and you shall then learn all."

She left the picture gallery leaning upon my arm. I assisted her to her carriage, and after bidding me an affectionate adieu she handed me her card, having with little difficulty obtained my promise to call upon her the next morning.

Great as was my delight at this unlooked-for recovery of a friend whom I had deemed forever lost to me, my meditations as I bent my steps homeward were sorrowful ones, for I could not help thinking of the change that had taken place both in her appearance and manners.

Florence Leighton was the only child of an opulent merchant. Caressed, admired and petted by all who knew her, her early years had passed without a single shadow to mar their brightness. Possessed of singular and radiant loveliness, added to which was a rare and winning softness of manner, it was no wonder that she at once took captive every heart, and was the idol of a numerous circle of friends. Combined with personal charms were those also of intellect—those rich treasures of mind were hers, which, even where beauty is absent, seldom fail

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to create for themselves an all-absorbing interest. Affectionate, impulsive and enthusiastic, she was a professed admirer of the beautiful and the good, and as with all young spirits there was a vein of romance in her nature. Her heart panted eagerly for appreciation and sympathy —she loved to be told that she was dear to those around her, and was never so happy as when the arm of tenderness softly encircled her, and the voice of affection was breathing its low, sweet tones in her ear.

Such was my girlhood's friend at her sixteenth year, which was the period when she left the village of C——, and accompanied by her father, whose health had for some time past been on the decline, set forth on a tour through Europe. Since then, as I have said before, I had never heard from her, my total ignorance of her address having been a preventive to any communication on my part. But now, at the age of twenty-six, she had again stood beside me—but so altered that I had failed to recognize her. I felt that naught but some bitter heart-sorrow could have effected the change—naught but some heavy heart-burden could have subdued those once exuberant spirits, paled that once glowing cheek, and cast so dark a shadow over the unclouded brow of by-gone years; and was convinced that not death's hand alone had done the work, but that hers was a tale of blighted hopes, and of deep feelings, which had been checked in their flow. And then too my thoughts lingered upon the memory of that hollow cough, which, even when I deemed her a stranger, had sent a sensation of dread through my heart!

As may be imagined, I was very anxious to know her history, and, therefore, at an early hour the following day I was on my way to my friend's residence.

Following the direction of her card, I soon found myself at the door of a splendid mansion, in one of our most fashionable squares. Inquiring for Mrs. Sutherland, as I had been desired to do, I was immediately ushered into the parlor, while the servant proceeded to announce my presence to his mistress. In a few seconds he returned, saying that Mrs. Sutherland being slightly indisposed, would be obliged to receive me in her dressing-room; so I followed him up stairs, and he led the way to a large and richly furnished apartment. As I entered I perceived Florence reclining upon a lounge in one corner of the room—but as soon as she heard my step she hastily raised herself, and in another moment was at my side. She wore a loose robe of snow white, and now that her mourning apparel was removed, I could better trace a resemblance to the Florence of the past. There was the same classically moulded head, with its dark, glossy and luxuriant tresses —and the pallid cheek of yesterday was illumined by a crimson glow—but ah! it was not the rose of health, but the feverish flush produced by excitement.

"Oh! I am *so* glad that you have come," she said, throwing her arm caressingly around me, and pressing her lips several times to my forehead, "dearest Annie, you know not how impatiently I have awaited your visit!" She drew me to a seat, and stationing herself beside me, listened eagerly to the words of endearment, which in former days she had loved so well to hear, and which now flowed from my lips, for, despite the weary years that had passed since then, Florence was still as fondly beloved.

"Let me rest thus, dear Annie," she said, while she leaned her lovely head upon my shoulder, and drew still closer the arm that encircled her, "just as I used to in old times—in those bright, happy days, when all was light upon my path. And now I will relate to you my mournful life-tale." Her voice was slightly tremulous, and her lip quivered perceptibly as she spoke, but quickly regaining her composure, she commenced her narrative. It would be vain for me to attempt a repetition of my friend's recital in her own words: so I have consequently chosen to record it after my own peculiar fashion.

The first four years of their absence were spent by Florence Leighton and her father at the most celebrated cities and watering-places throughout England, France and Germany, and it was not till toward the close of the fourth year that they visited Italy, when, after the usual survey of its many wonderful works of nature and arts, they finally selected a beautiful villa near the city of Florence as their place of abode during the rest of their sojourn in that classic land. They had letters of introduction to many distinguished families, and were soon surrounded by a large and fashionable circle who claimed their friendship.

One morning Mr. Leighton returned from a visit, whither, on account of indisposition, his daughter had been prevented from accompanying him, and the latter noticing that her father was more than usually elated in spirits, on inquiring the cause learned that he had just met with the nephew of a valued but deceased friend. This gentleman, she also discovered, was a Mr. Sutherland, from New York, very wealthy, and a widower.

The circumstance which afforded so much gratification to the parent, made but little im-

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pression upon the daughter, and she thought no more of it till it was forcibly re-called to her mind, a few days afterward, when she received a card, with the name of Mr. Sutherland inscribed thereon, together with a desire from her father that she would descend to the drawing-room.

The request was immediately complied with—and with little feeling of interest in the visitor, Florence proceeded toward the apartment where he was stationed. She had expected to find in Mr. Sutherland a gentleman of middle age—but what was her surprise on being introduced by her father to a young man who seemed to have attained no more than his eight and twentieth year. In appearance he was extremely prepossessing—tall and commanding, with a noble brow, dark and speaking eyes, and a countenance of a decidedly intellectual cast. His was one of those faces that at once strike and impress the beholder, and he possessed too a dignity of manner which was admirably calculated to win at first sight both attention and respect. His conversation was varied and animated, and bespoke a highly cultivated mind. To say that Florence was pleased with her new acquaintance would be to say too little. Ere half an hour had elapsed, she became aware that he had awakened an interest which she had never experienced before.

From that day Herbert Sutherland was a frequent guest at the villa; he became Mr. Leighton's favorite associate, and was often the companion of Florence during her walks and rides. Day after day did she welcome him to her side with increased pleasure, and ere their acquaintanceship had been of many weeks duration the truth was fully unveiled to Florence, that she who till now had ever turned coldly from offered homage, fervently rejoiced at the thought that she was the object of the high-souled Sutherland's devoted attentions; for he was all her imagination had ever pictured as the one to whom she should give her hand. There was one shadow, however, that crossed her spirit when Florence thought of him in this light, and that was caused by the remembrance of his previous marriage, and the thought that she was not the first love of his heart. She felt that where she gave her affection she would fain have it returned wholly and undividedly—that there should be no regret for the past, no sad memories to cast a shade over the happy present: and then she asked herself if it could be thus if she wedded Herbert Sutherland. In those moments her soul was full of gloom, and yet these reflections were productive of no result. Sutherland had already acquired sufficient influence over her heart to enable her to banish them, and rather than turn aside from his proffered affection, she resolved to abide the consequence of her choice; and when the hour came that his vows of love were breathed into her ear, she became his betrothed bride. By her father Florence knew that her engagement was hailed with gladness. He had long been anxious that she should marry; for by an unforseen circumstance, shortly after their departure from home, Mr. Leighton had been deprived of all his property. His only dependance now was a life-annuity, sufficiently ample for all his expenses—but as of course it ceased at his death, and his health was still impaired, the thought that his child would then be left unprovided for had long troubled him. And when he was at length assured that she was about to settle herself to such evident advantage, it was not to be wondered at that he should have been greatly rejoiced.

Several weeks of unalloyed happiness to Florence followed; all doubts and fears were, for a time, driven from her mind, and she gave herself up wholly to the thought that she was beloved by him to whom she had surrendered her heart's first rich wealth of affection. How earnestly did she watch for his coming footstep! How eagerly did she drink in every tone of that loved and manly voice! And yet when he was near she was timid and reserved—her lips never spoke the feelings within, for they were too deep and thrilling for words.

About this time Florence received a communication from a friend residing at New York, to whom she had written a letter during the first period of her acquaintance with Herbert Sutherland, in which she had alluded to him frequently, and described his appearance and character in the highest terms. Much to her surprise, that reply now informed her that the writer knew Sutherland well, she having been an intimate friend of his wife. Innumerable were the eulogiums she lavished upon him, while she spoke of his late wife as a lovely and enchanting being, to whom she had been tenderly attached, and whose early and sudden death had, for a time, almost deprived him of reason. Sutherland, it seemed had married when very young, having just attained his majority. Scarcely six months afterward he was called to mourn the loss of his young and beautiful partner, and since then he had courted retirement, till his sudden resolution to travel astonished all who knew him. Her friend concluded her letter by warning Florence to be careful how she allowed herself to take an interest in Sutherland, for though under other circumstances he would have been the very one

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whom she should have chosen for her, she would not by any means that she should now marry him. She felt confident that Florence could never be happy as his wife, for it was her conviction that if Herbert Sutherland married a second time, it would not be from motives of affection, but merely to obtain a mistress for his splendid, but now lonely mansion.

Words would be inadequate to describe the effect that this letter produced upon the mind of Florence Leighton. For many moments she paced the apartment in the most violent agitation, till the intelligence that Mr. Sutherland was awaiting her appearance, showed her the necessity of endeavoring to compose herself. When she had become sufficiently calm, she descended to receive him. Again the magic of his presence overcome the influence of those dark thoughts, and when he left her, and she again returned to her own apartment, her first impulse was to destroy the letter that had caused her so much pain.

Weeks again elapsed, and the day at length dawned when Florence was to become the bride of Herbert Sutherland. On the morning of that day, just a few hours previous to the time appointed for the marriage ceremony, Mr. Leighton sought his child once more to express his delight at her approaching union, and his deep thankfulness that when he was called away she would still have one manly heart on which to lean for protection. It was then that Florence gained a fatal knowledge that drove from her soul all those bright anticipations which she had allowed to dwell within it, and brought back the despondency which with a strong effort she had hitherto succeeded in dispelling. As has been previously mentioned, Sutherland was the nephew of one who in their early days had been Mr. Leighton's most intimate associate. A benefit conferred by the latter merited the lasting gratitude of his friend, and though their residence in separate places afterward caused the intimacy between them to be less close, the obligation was not forgotten by the one who incurred it. The elder Mr. Sutherland never married, and having been extremely fortunate in business, he accumulated a large estate, and at his decease, an event that took place about two years previous to the commencement of his nephew's acquaintance with Florence Leighton, he bequeathed to Herbert all that he possessed. Sometime before his death he had learned Mr. Leighton's losses, for the two friends had ever maintained a correspondence, and the anxious parent had more than once expressed his fear that he should be obliged to leave his only child dependant upon the world. A thought then took possession of Mr. Sutherland's mind that if a marriage between his own nephew and the daughter of his friend, could be effected, he would thus be enabled to repay the debt of gratitude which had never been cancelled. And the dying uncle imparted that thought to Herbert, who had not till a day or two before spoken to Mr. Leighton of the union as having been earnestly desired by his deceased relative.

It was with feelings of the deepest misery that Florence now listened as the facts were imparted to her. The warning contained in her friend's letter was brought vividly to mind, and she was fully assured that Herbert Sutherland wedded not a second time for love, but because he would obey the dying request of one who had ever watched over him with the tenderness of a parent. He would endow with wealth the child of his uncle's friend, by giving her his hand and name, thus requiting the benefit once bestowed upon that uncle—but his heart was in the grave with her who had been so early taken from him. Perhaps he did feel for her a slight attachment, sufficient to warrant the words with which he had often greeted her, but was this the passionate love which she had dreamed of and expected?—was it worthy of that which *her* spirit tendered to him? Could she ever be satisfied with such affection?

Mr. Leighton noticed not the paleness of his daughter's cheek, and knew not that the words which he had that day spoken, had completely paralyzed the sweet emotions with which her heart had overflowed.

At that moment a thought crossed the mind of Florence that she might even yet refuse to become the wife of him who she believed could never give her the ardent affection for which her soul thirsted. If she wedded Herbert Sutherland, would not hers, she asked herself, be a life of torture, loving as she did, and receiving in return merely the cold civilities wrung from him by the tie which would connect them? Yes—and she felt that it would be better far to break the engagement at once—ay, even when the period of its fulfilment had drawn so near—break it ere the vows were registered, though she knew that through life Sutherland would still be as tenderly loved, and that none other should ever claim her devotion. But just then her glance fell upon her father's face—she remembered his anxiety for her marriage, that he might see her secured in that station for which she had been educated, and could she to ensure her own peace wreck the dearest hopes of that parent's heart? Florence felt that she could not—and with this conviction came the resolve that she would say naught against the ceremony,

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but that at the time appointed it should take place. But she determined that from the moment she became a wife, her demeanor toward her future husband should be cold and distant—that no word, no sign, should ever betray that she cared for him, and that all the burning, intense feelings which raged within, should be enveloped in an eternal shroud.

A few hours after, Florence Leighton stood before the altar, and as she pronounced the words that bound her for life to Herbert Sutherland, her voice was calm and unfaltering, and not one of the brilliant and admiring throng who had gathered there to witness the marriage ceremony, dreamed of the internal conflict beneath whose influence the heart of the gentle bride was nearly bursting. Florence had not once raised her eyes to *his* face—she dared not—but when at the conclusion of the rite, her husband bent forward to imprint his first kiss upon her brow, her cheek was cold and marble pale, and a sudden tremor shook her whole frame. Sutherland noticed it, and for the first time their eyes met! An instant gazed he into that colorless face—then suddenly his own became of an ashy hue, and as he turned hastily away an expression lingered upon it, which she vainly sought to interpret.

Friends now crowded around to tender their congratulations—alas! they little thought that the shrine on which they laid those fervent offerings, was one of utter and hopeless desolation!

The day of her marriage seemed destined to prove one of mingled anguish to the bride. About two hours after the ceremony was performed, Mr. Leighton was seized with a paralytic stroke. He was instantly borne to his chamber, and for three successive days his daughter hung wildly over his couch, refusing to relinquish her station. Ere the fourth day drew to a close, her beloved parent breathed his last; and when the knowledge that he was indeed dead dawned upon the mind of Florence, all consciousness forsook her, and she was conveyed from the room in a death-like swoon, from which it was some hours ere she was fully aroused.

I will not dwell upon the first months of my friend's married life. Suffice it to say that her determination was fulfilled. Sutherland never had occasion to suspect that his wife cared for him, and whenever it was possible she avoided his presence. While they remained abroad, which was for eighteen months after Mr. Leighton's death, their cold, formal intercourse was compatible with the rules of foreign society. But when they returned to America it was different; they were brought continually into contact, and were obliged to preserve the appearance of domestic contentment, lest the world should learn aught of their estrangement.

In her early hours Florence had often pictured to herself the quiet, happy home, which should be hers when she married. She had thought how little she would then care for the society of any but her husband and a few select friends—how she would make her dwelling "a Paradise of books and flowers," enlivened by the music of *his* voice, and by the magic influence of his presence. But alas! these romantic visions were all too soon dispelled. Her residence was now at New York, in the same mansion where the former wife of Sutherland had presided. The servants too where those who had known and loved the first Mrs. Sutherland, and though it was not long ere their devotion was extended to their new mistress, the ear of Florence was continually pained by their praises of the lost one. Yes, *pained*, for it was indeed so. The constant reiteration of her predecessor's perfections, betrayed that earth had scarcely owned her superior, and that she well merited the deepest, truest love that could have been bestowed upon her. And in this manner was my friend daily made conscious of what in her meek humility of spirit she considered as her own inferiority, till she wondered not that Herbert Sutherland loved not her who was so widely different from the object of his soul's first adoration.

The period of mourning for her deceased parent having fully expired, Mrs. Sutherland was at liberty to enter into gay society, and to accept the innumerable invitations that came pouring in from every quarter; and while her heart still plead earnestly for retirement and the presence of one loved being, she went forth into the brilliant circles of fashion with a smiling face, and a spirit apparently devoid of a single shadow. For the three years following her return from abroad, was she constantly mingling with the fashionable world, and she daily sought excitement of this kind to free herself from the burden of painful, nay, agonizing thought. Yet even when others deemed her in her gayest moods, that wild exuberance of spirits was but a mask under which to conceal the struggle that was going on within.

Spite of what she believed to be his indifference, her husband was still as dear to Florence as he had been in the hour when she had first acknowledged to herself that she loved him. How often when he little knew that she was thinking of him, was her glance resting upon his face, till remembering that the deep affection she felt for him was valueless in his sight, she would turn away with tearful eyes, and

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sensations of the most overwhelming misery. Oh! it was a fearful thing for one like Florence Sutherland to deem that she loved in vain—to think that the heart for whose tenderness she pined might never throb for her, and that she must still cherish that attachment for long, dreary years, without the slightest hope of ever meeting a return. Yet for nearly five years was she fated to experience all the bitterness of unrequited love, till at length a fever, caused by continual anguish of mind, seized her brain, and for weeks she hovered upon the very threshold of eternity. But contrary to the expectation of the physicians, a change was at last perceptible in her disease, and she slowly returned to reason. During the first hours of her convalescence her husband was ever near her, and an almost overpowering sensation of happiness pervaded the soul of Florence, for in her present weak state she was unable to question herself as to the cause of this change. One thought alone then occupied her mind—*he* loved her, and oh! what exquisite delight did that conviction afford! But as she grew stronger suspicion again resumed its sway. She learned from her nurse that through the whole period during which she lay upon her couch utterly unconscious of what passed around her, Sutherland had been her constant attendant; and then came the belief that in the ravings of delirium he had become possessed of the secret which had ever been buried within the recesses of her own sad heart; that he had discovered her love for himself, and that his present manner toward her was caused merely by his sympathy with her long-concealed sufferings. *He pitied her.* Ah! how Florence writhed beneath that thought. And she resolved that she would never accept his sympathy—that if, when bereft of reason, she had revealed the truth, her actions now should lead him to regard it as far otherwise. So with coldness she repulsed his attentions, until at last they ceased, and he never entered her apartment, save for a few brief moments each day, when with constrained politeness he came to inquire concerning her health.

About a week after his wife's entire recovery, Sutherland informed her that business of a pressing nature would call him immediately to Charleston, where he would perhaps be obliged remain for several weeks. Preparations were accordingly made for his departure.

On the morning previous to that appointed for his journey, thinking that her husband had gone out, and wishing to dissipate the cloud of gloom that hung over her mind, Florence hastened to the library to obtain book with which, if possible, to divert her thoughts. As she softly unclosed the door, a strange and unexpected sight met her view. In a distant corner of the apartment, beside a table, sat Herbert Sutherland, his face buried in his hands, while his whole frame shook with some violent and uncontrollable emotion. Moved beyond measure at the observance of such bitter grief in one for whom she would have gladly given up life to spare the slightest pang, the wife's first impulse was to spring forward and endeavor to alleviate his sorrow by words of soothing and comfort. But suddenly a small miniature which he grasped met her eye! It was upon the features of the departed that he had doubtless been gazing—the memory of all that he lost when *she* died which had caused that outburst of grief. So assured that naught from her own lips could heal the wound, the sensitive Florence retired from the library as noiselessly as she had entered it.

About a fortnight after her husband's departure, a lady with whom Florence had long been on intimate terms, called to see her, and during their conversation the visitor expressed her earnest hope that when Sutherland returned his health would be fully restored. With a pallid cheek and faltering voice, her auditor repeated the words, and when the lady noted the surprise and alarm depicted upon Mrs. Sutherland's countenance, a sudden surmise darted across her mind, and she said in a kind and soothing tone,

"Be not thus distressed, my dear Mrs. Sutherland. Your husband doubtless sought to conceal from you the truth that his health was slightly enfeebled, that he might not give you unnecessary anxiety concerning him, and I fear that I have unconsciously done wrong by informing you of what he doubtless wished to keep from your knowledge. Yet, rest assured, that a brief sojourn in a warm climate will do much toward bracing up his energies, and he will return to you again with renewed health and hope."

But each sentence that she uttered only served to implant a more poisonous sting in the heart of her companion, and though Florence strove to be calm while her guest was near, no sooner had the latter left her, than hastening to her own apartment, she threw herself upon a couch and gave vent to a wild outbreak of feeling. Fears for her husband were first in her thoughts, and she imagined that he was more dangerously enfeebled than had been represented, and that she would perhaps never see him again. And then too Florence remembered that he had left her at such a time, without even expressing a wish for her society—had thrown himself in the hour of sickness upon the mercy of strangers, preferring their careless services to the ministrations of her to whom he was wedded. One resolve now took possession of her soul. She would write

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to a friend who resided at Charleston, and beg her as she valued her future peace to ascertain the true state of Sutherland's health; and if in her reply there was aught to warrant any fears, Florence determined that no consideration should hinder her from hastening to his assistance. Not that she intended he should be annoyed with a knowledge of her presence: no—he should never be aware that she was near him, but in the guise of a nurse her hand should smooth his pillow, and perform for him all the tender offices of the sick room.

The letter was accordingly despatched, and for days Florence awaited an answer. It came at last, and its contents confirmed her darkest imaginings. In compliance with her request, the writer had penned the epistle candidly; and she informed Mrs. Sutherland that the object of her solicitude was very ill; that the fatigue of travelling had been too much for him, and that the physician had declared he must soon fall a victim to the most fatal of all diseases—consumption. Not a tear escaped the heart-broken Florence as she perused the letter, and when she laid it aside preparations for her journey were immediately commenced with that same strange composure—for her grief was too deep for outward expression.

On her arrival in Charleston, Mrs. Sutherland's first visit was to the physician who attended her husband, and introducing herself as the wife of his patient, she confided to him her plan. At first he withheld his approval, for he feared that she would be unable to control herself, and that some impulsive word or act would lead to a recognition. But when with looks of tearful supplication she implored his consent, and promised never to reveal her disguise, he hearkened to her prayers, and reluctantly gave his sanction.

An hour afterward Florence stood by the bedside of Sutherland, and gazed long and tenderly upon that pale, wan face. He was sleeping, and she had full leisure to contemplate the ravages disease had made in that noble, manly countenance. At length he stirred, his eyes languidly unclosed, and in an almost inaudible voice he asked for water. As she proceeded to comply with his demand, the hand of the wife trembled so that she could scarcely support the chalice which she held to his lips. The invalid perceived that she was agitated. "You are ill, I fear," he said, in a low, faint voice, "but surely," he added, after a moment's pause, during which he had gazed scrutinizingly at her, "surely you are not the nurse to whom I have been accustomed?" For an instant she knew not what to reply, but at last told him that his former nurse had been dismissed, and that she hoped he would endeavor to reconcile himself to the change. He started as he caught those tones, though she had tried disguise them—and Florence retired to a remote part of the room, where, for some time, she pretended to be deeply interested in a book. She knew that he was watching her, and for some moments dared not trust herself to look up, but when after awhile she summoned courage to do so, their eyes for the first time met.

"Florence! my own Florence!" burst from the lips of Herbert Sutherland, and in an instant she was again beside him, all her promises of caution forgotten, clasped to his heart, and breathing broken sentences of love in his ear. "My Florence!" murmured Sutherland, in a tone of impassioned tenderness, as he drew that slight form still closer to his bosom, "and can it indeed be that you care for me? Can it be that I have wronged you by the belief that I was unloved—that I have ruthlessly thrown away a life-time of the soul's sweetest happiness." He paused, as if unable to proceed—and the next moment a dark stream of blood gushed from his mouth and nostrils, deluging the carpet and crimsoning all things around! The thrilling shrieks of the agonized wife speedily brought many to her assistance, but ere medical aid could be procured Herbert Sutherland was no more.

For several weeks after the sudden death of her husband Florence was again prostrated upon the couch of sickness, and there were periods when it was feared that each moment would be her last. And when at length consciousness returned, and she began slowly to regain strength, the flood of dark memories that came pressing upon her heart for a time threatened to drive reason forever from its throne. Every thought of the past was to her fraught with bitterness, and she continually reproached herself for the entire destruction of their wedded happiness, and felt that but for her resolve to hide from Sutherland's knowledge the workings of her spirit, she would not have been as now widowed, and bereft of every earthly hope.

When she had become sufficiently recruited in health to travel, my friend returned to her home in the northern metropolis. All who had known her were ready to greet her return with sympathy for her sorrows, though none guessed their full extent. But Florence studiously avoided society; a settled melancholy had taken possession of her mind, and in solitude and retirement she mourned unceasingly over the past. Some days after her arrival in New York, she received a letter from the

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physician who had attended both Sutherland and herself in Charleston. Accompanying it was a small package, which he announced had been placed in his hand by Mr. Sutherland just two days before his death, with the desire that immediately after his decease it might be forwarded to the one to whom it was addressed. He added that he had not complied with the request before, as he feared lest the contents of the package might be of an exciting nature, and he had wished to delay their perusal till she had in a measure recovered from the effects of her recent affliction, and begged Mrs. Sutherland's forgiveness if he had erred in not sending it sooner.

With a trembling hand Florence now broke the seal, and as she did so a miniature of herself met her view, while beside it lay a letter in the handwriting of her husband. Hastily unfolding it, she read—

"Ere your eyes rest upon these lines, Florence, he who has penned them will be numbered with earth's departed. It is for the last time that I now intrude myself upon your notice, and though I have struggled against the wish, it has been vainly. Upon a death-bed much may be breathed forth that in life would have lain concealed forever within the heart—and *I* am dying, Florence. No longer may I deny myself the melancholy satisfaction of telling you how dearly I have loved you, even though that affection has waked no answering echo in your bosom. Think not that I intend to reproach you, Florence; well do I know that you never deceived me by the slightest protestation that might lead me to believe myself secure in your love. I alone have been to blame—I, through whose medium so many years of your youth have been sacrificed at a shrine where your heart refused to worship—I who could weakly, vainly, foolishly deem myself blest with the devotion of a being like Florence Leighton. Oh! how often have I reproached myself for having imagined thus—and it is to ask your forgiveness, Florence, for the indulgence in that one bright dream of bliss, that I have summoned my feeble energies once more to my assistance.

"As you are doubtless aware it was the wish of one who had ever been to me as a father, that I should be united in marriage to the daughter of Mr. Leighton, the friend of his early manhood. When this desire was revealed to me by my uncle, I had been for some years mourning a melancholy bereavement—and in reply I besought him to relinquish this cherished plan, for I then thought that I could never love again. My relative did not urge me more upon the subject, but he entrusted to my care a letter to his friend, which I promised to deliver in person to Mr. Leighton. Why he wished that *I* should *myself* present his communication to his friend I did not then divine; but I have since thought, Florence, that he had never entirely given up his favorite project, and hoped that by being introduced to your father, I should eventually be brought in contact with yourself. Doubtless he was aware of your extreme loveliness of mind and person, and had a presentiment that his nephew would be doubly susceptible of your merits. Soon after my uncle's death I departed for Europe, and had been abroad for nearly two years, when, in the city of Florence, chance introduced me to your parent. He expressed an earnest desire that our acquaintance should be continued, and pressed me to call and see him at his own residence. A few days afterward I complied with his request, bringing with me the letter written by my uncle. Your father received it with emotion, and while he retired to his own apartment to peruse it, his daughter was summoned to the drawing-room to entertain the visitor. It was then that we met, Florence—it was from that moment that I felt it would be possible for me to love a second time: and I returned to my lodgings inspired with a thousand new and sweet hopes, such as I had imagined I should never more experience. We were frequently together afterward, and from your society did I daily derive indescribable pleasure. You were so noble-minded, Florence—so guileless and pure-hearted, that when with you I felt as though an angel was beside me. And when at last I poured forth my avowal of affection, and won from your lips a promise to become my own, words could not portray the rapture that filled my soul. Little did I then imagine that she whose very footstep was to me a sound of melody, and whose voice was the sweetest music to which I cared to listen, in reality returned not my attachment, and only out of regard for the feelings of a parent consented to become my wife. You may wonder how I learned this, Florence—wait yet a few seconds, and all shall be made clear to you.

"During the weeks succeeding our engagement, you became each day if possible dearer to me, and though there was ever maidenly reserve. Ah! had I but possessed penetration sufficient to discover that it proceeded from a different cause, *you* would have been spared years of what I know you have regarded as an irksome bondage. But I was too completely absorbed in my passionate idolatry to deem for an instant that its object prized not my daily offered homage.

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"The day at length came that was to make you wholly mine, and side by side we knelt before the altar. The ceremony was concluded —my arm tenderly encircled you, and I bent forward to kiss the fair, pale cheek of my own sweet bride. At that instant you raised your eyes to mine, and an expression of anguish such as I had never before beheld on mortal countenance met my gaze, while at the same time your frame was convulsed with aspen-like quiverings! In that glance—in that single moment's emotion, I read my future fate. *You loved me not!* Oh! Florence, Florence, may you never know the agony that dwelt within that little sentence. Often since have I wondered that in the deep, unutterable misery of that hour my brain became not disordered! But I controlled my feelings, and, with a steady voice and smiling lip, listened and replied to the heartfelt congratulations of my friends.

"My forebodings were realized. The demeanor of her who was now my wife was always cold and reserved toward me. Never did one word of tenderness meet my ear—never did the slightest evidence of affection for your husband escape you: and so, too proud to show what I felt at your indifference, I restrained every emotion, and was apparently as cold and careless as yourself. But I loved you still—ay, loved you deeply, purely, fervently, and there was nothing that I would not have done to contribute in the slightest degree to your happiness. Nor has my affection for you ever abated. Even at the present moment as I write, there is beside me a miniature of her whom I have loved more than life—of yourself, Florence. You knew not that I possessed it, yet for years has it been my most valued treasure. But I am looking my last upon it now, for with this letter it is to be given to my physician, who, after I am gone, will place both in your possession.

"But I must go on with my narrative. Why you wedded me was a problem that I could not solve. Sometimes I accused you of want of feeling, for I knew had you been attached to another you would never have given your hand in marriage to me—but I could not think thus long, for when in the society of your lady friends I would watch you unobserved, and I saw too plainly that your intercourse with your own sex betrayed that yours was a sensitive and affectionate heart.

"After our return to America, the coldness that existed between us diminished not in the least. We were seldom together, and your principal delight seemed to be in a continued round of pleasure. Much did I marvel at this, for previous to our marriage you had often declared your disinclination for the gaieties of fashionable life, and I knew well that your tastes were of a more retired nature. It was not till within a few weeks past that the mystery of this change was explained. You were seized with sudden illness, and for many days it was said that you could not survive. And it was then as I bent mournfully over what I deemed would be your death-couch, that sentences fell from your lips which since have been continually ringing in my ears. In the ravings of delirium you called upon your father—you besought him to shield you from a dreadful doom—to save you from a marriage with Herbert Sutherland, and implored him as he valued your future happiness to hearken to your prayer. And this strain constantly greeted me when I approached your bed-side, while each tone as you uttered it stung me to the soul. I saw now why you had become my wife—it was at the solicitation of your parent: I felt too why you had mingled so often of late with the world—it was to avoid the presence of him whom you had never cared for. And then I thought of all that you must have undergone, and accused myself of cruelty in having preserved an appearance of coldness toward you, while I felt the greatest self-reproach that I had not endeavored to win at least your friendship and esteem. As gradually your fever abated I was often beside you —but my attentions I soon perceived were little desired, and at last, quite discouraged, I resolved to weary you no more with my presence.

"You have now before you, Florence, a complete history of our wedded life. I have written it that you might know how fully I can sympathize in what must inevitably have been your sufferings as the wife of one whose affection you never valued, and that with this knowledge you might listen more leniently to my supplication for forgiveness. My only fault has been the earnest love with which I have regarded you, and the supposition that on your part it was returned. Had I thought otherwise, oh! believe me, Florence, never would I have led you an unwilling bride to the altar. And you will forgive my error, will you not—you will forgive me, though I have unwittingly blighted what should have been the happiest years of your existence?

"They tell me that I have not many days to live, but I murmur not: for me death has no terrors, and I am ready and willing to depart whenever it shall please my Maker to summon me hence. Yet I still feel an eager longing to behold you once again, and blest indeed would I be could I die with your hand clasping my own, and with your eyes gazing into my face,

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even though that gaze betokened naught but friendly sympathy. But it may not be.

"I must pause—for my weak hand refuses longer to perform its office. Farewell, Florence—may the future be to you as full of sunshine as the past has been of gloom, and if you ever think of me let it be with kindness, and as of one who after 'life's fitful fever' sleeps quietly in the shadow of the grave. Florence, dearest, dearest Florence—for the last time *my* Florence—farewell, HERBERT SUTHERLAND."

Why should I linger longer upon this mournful history? Why dwell upon the hourly increasing anguish of the stricken wife, and the utter prostration of spirit which ensued after the reception of that touching letter? Day by day her cheek grew paler and thinner—yet there were times too when it wore a strange, unnatural bloom. She was dying of consumption, it was said—but alas! it was of a broken heart.

The eventful period of our meeting at the gallery of paintings was the last time that Florence Sutherland left her dwelling, until she was borne forth to her rest in the tomb. Day after day for many weeks was I her constant visitor—but one morning when as usual I entered the chamber of my gentle and beloved friend, no answering smile met my word of greeting, and the face that I looked upon wore that expression of calm repose which death alone can give to the suffering in spirit. "Earth was poorer by one bright soul—but there was an angel more in Heaven."

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ELEANOR HARTLEY.: A ROMANCE OF DOMESTIC LIFE. CHAPTER I.
BY EDGAR WAYNE, M.D.
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ELEANOR HARTLEY.

A ROMANCE OF DOMESTIC LIFE.

BY EDGAR WAYNE, M. D.

CHAPTER I.

It is a heartless world. And in so saying we do not charge that men wilfully and unprovoked do what will injure their fellows; but that the selfishness which seems inseparable from human nature tempts us continually to forget the misfortunes and happiness of others, in the furtherance of our own purposes, or it may be, in the mere gratification of our own curiosity, or the pursuit of temporary and thoughtless amusement.

A better illustration of this position cannot be found anywhere than in a house whose Lares and Penates have been ruthlessly tipped from their pedestals—whose

"Broken tea-cups wisely kept for show"

are carelessly turned cracked-side out—whose make-shifts are made public, and whose whole nakedness is uncovered, in pursuance of the auctioneer's notice of a sale. People troop in without waiting to touch their feet to the scraper, heedless how much of the outer soil they may bring into the now dismantled domestic sanctuary. There is no look or thought of respect to another man's house in the faces of those who enter—there is no evidence of consideration or of kindness in any face among the entering throng. Even women push through the open doors as unconcernedly as if no one of their own sex had ever set her heart on the arrangement of the now disarranged apartments. If some considerate person, more compassionate than the rest, stops to think of the bright and happy faces which smiled when the carpet was "matched" in itself, and the curtains were declared to be a match for the carpet, and both in tasteful keeping or relieving contrast with the walls—if we say such a dreamer does venture in she is out of her place. Auctions are the scenes for bargains—not for sentiment, and she will find, ten to one, that she has need of her thoughts, to save her person in the bustle, and, therefore, cannot afford to let them be filling up the pictures of her imagination; unless, indeed, she is indifferent to punches and pushes, and jostlings aside. Every thing in such a place is required to be *business-like*. Business is selfishness reduced to rule; and its code, established by precedent, and borne out by custom, is a system of excuses for indifference to the finer feelings of which the hearth-stone is, or should be the centre and the seat.

It was a rainy—not exactly a rainy day either—but worse; one of those drizzly, uncomfortable

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days which give a man no credit for his heroism in breasting the storm, while they inflict upon him more positive and absolute discomfort than an open and honest down-pouring of the element. The cab-horses looked miserable, and their vehicles worse; the drivers stamped and kicked about on the pavement with the hopeless look of the landlord of the Red Cow, "when never a customer was coming, at all, at all." The very paving-stones seemed to have taken the gloomy infection, and were covered with inert paste—with just enough moisture to look muddy, and not enough water to give any idea of freshness or cleanliness. But in spite of all these unpropitious looks and circumstances, the red flag, and the placard fixed on a moveable pedestal "sale this morning at ten o'clock," drew not a few persons to the stately residence, the furniture of which was about to come under the hammer.

Many crowds had been in that house. It was a modern structure, yet had its walls witnessed weddings, routs, christenings, and latterly, a funeral. The builder, who had erected and furnished it, fancying that he had much goods, laid up for many years, had lost, first fortune, and then health. With the first his fair-weather friends disappeared, and with the loss of the ability to remedy his misfortunes his proud spirit broke, and he died—of disappointment. Now his widow and orphan child were compelled to witness what seemed to them sacrilege, and a worse bereavement almost than the loss of the husband and father—or rather we should say a continued death of that dear friend. Everything about the house was identified with him. As the pictures, statues and articles of comfort and of *vertu* which he had collected—investing each with a dear and peculiar interest—as these articles were taken away from the places or niches where they had been placed, it seemed as if the former owner would reappear to chide the rude hands which were thus dismantling his carefully arranged apartments. And it was not until all was done, and the wreck was complete, that the stricken family could believe such a dismantling possible.

It was upon the privacy of such desolate grief as this that the bargain-seekers trespassed. The mother and daughter shrinkingly withdrew from the approach of the strangers—they should perhaps have gone from the house altogether; and they would have done so, if they could have been induced to act upon the suggestion, and to accept the kindness of their friends. But there was a fascination about the place which they could not resist. There seemed to them a necessity that they should be present at the pulling down of their household gods, and, feeling wrench for wrench at their heart strings, still labor to seem unmoved while they were really sick with sorrow. A sore trial it was indeed, for while every article seemed to them almost sacred, the bargain-seekers appeared as if they could not find terms of contempt expressive enough. One wondered how any sane person *could* buy such chairs—another exclaimed against the ridiculous gaudiness of this article, and another against the contemptible cheapness of that. Some protested that Hottentots must have occupied the premises to abuse the furniture at a rate so scandalous: others guessed that as they knew their race must be a short, they strove to make it a merry one, and get as much wear as possible out of what, never paid for in the beginning, must come under the sheriff's hammer in the end.

"Come away, mother, do!" cried the daughter, at last, "why should we remain and suffer this, among these unfeeling people. The only excuse which charity can suggest for them is that they do not know we are here."

"No, Eleanor—I must stay," answered the mother. "It is a little disagreeable certainly, but we must become accustomed to disagreeables. If your late father had only forced himself to look the truth in the face——"

A "scene" followed. The widow's reflections were cut off by a fit of hysterics; and we must do the "business-like" assemblage the justice to say that they permitted the event actually to stop for a moment the process of inspection and the trade of chaffering. One gentleman among them was so considerate as to call a carriage, and hand the ladies in; and inquiring of Eleanor where they would be carried, to send them home. It was the last time for many a long and weary day that daughter or mother were abroad, for Mrs. Hartley went from the carriage to her bed, and lost all memory of her bereavement and misfortunes in the phrenzied fancies of the delirium of a fever.

CHAPTER II.

Many weeks did Mrs. Hartley suffer. When a mind and body naturally strong are overthrown by anguish of spirit and break under sorrow, the illness is long, and the struggle is fearful. It may be, however, that Eleanor suffered scarcely less. Affection always magnifies danger; and the sufferings of Mrs. Hartley were too great, and her danger too imminent to leave her daughter for many weeks a hope of her recovery. But in the very demand upon her time and constant attention, which left her scarce a thought or a moment for anything except her mother, there was relief. Constant present employment prevented

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her mind from dwelling upon what would indeed have seemed a hopeless future. She had counted on the aid and encouragement of her mother in the laborious life of sorrow to which only she could look forward; but if that parent thus broke down at the first approach of grief, what encouragement of hope could the future present? Instead of cheerful aid, the broken heart of Mrs. Hartley would impose the duty of sustaining a continual mourner upon one who herself was entitled to consolation; and the hopeless repining and inconsolable grief which had reduced a strong woman to sickness, it could hardly be expected would be removed by her indisposition. It was rather to be feared that her shattered mind, less capable of endurance, would still farther depress her; and that she would become, if she recovered, confirmed in melancholy. But, as we have already said, Eleanor's constant occupation prevented her indulgence in these forebodings. She was, beside of a superior mind, and gifted with extraordinary resolution and fortitude.

The illness of her mother reached an alarming crisis. No human means, other than the untiring devotion of a daughter so affectionate and assiduous could have availed to preserve the life, which, for many days, seemed scarcely to remain in the prostrated frame of the invalid. The attending physician called in the aid of a consulting friend; and though the stranger fully approved and endorsed the practice of the regular attendant, he repeated his visits, again and again with the concurrence of course of his professional brother. Eleanor saw in this solicitude of the physicians the imminence of her mother's case. She had no thought, no attention for any other subject; and proved herself the most affectionate of nurses, and the most devoted of daughters. But her own health was giving way under the continual and wearing labor of the sick room. The roses had entirely left her complexion, and her cheeks were sunken and haggard, while her eyes beamed with unnatural lustre. How strange is the phenomenon often presented in a case of devotion like this—the mind growing more active, and the senses more acute with watching, as the body fails and wastes under its labor. It would seem as if a child, in the performance of these filial duties received the reward annexed to the commandment with promise; and that strength from on high to endure labors and watchings repaid the pious care of the child for the parent.

Eleanor's toil was more than requited when, one morning, the physicians pronounced her mother out of danger. But Dr. Winter, the friend who had so constantly improved his introduction as consulting physician, and in despite of all medical etiquette appeared inclined to continue his visits now that there was scarce need of one doctor, turned to Eleanor and added, "I cannot pronounce this most exemplary daughter and faithful nurse out of danger, unless she will now promise to remit her attentions to her mother, and take some heed to herself."

Eleanor blushed deeply, and the doctor continued—

"We are often blamed for the relapse, and even for the death of parents, when the blame truly lies with their friends, for leaving our efforts unaided. But you will permit me to say, Miss Eleanor, that it is more to your skill, than to any aid we have rendered her that your mother is restored. If the sacrifice of your life were required to preserve your mother's you would cheerfully make it—but no such sacrifice is required of you. It is your duty now, not only to yourself, but to your parents, and to a world which can ill afford to lose such excellence, that you should take care of your own health."

Eleanor had a shrinking horror of flattery, and turned to the speaker with that superiority which the suspicion of adulation always confers upon a high-minded woman. The man who stoops to flattery forgets respect. But in Dr. Winter's fine ingenuous countenance she saw nothing to warrant the coolness with which she was about to treat him; and everything which could indicate sincerity and truthfulness. She blushed, and her eyes filled with tears. He blushed too from the contagious example—and might have added more embarrassing words; but just at that moment the querulous voice of the invalid called from the sick room, and as Dr. Winter took his leave, he put much more than mere professional warmth into his parting pressure of her hand.

CHAPTER III.

The night following was a refreshing one for the invalid and for her devoted nurse. The mother slept the calm, deep sleep of convalescence. Eleanor's dreams were pleasantly interrupted with an approving presence, which began like an angel with wings, and changed to Dr. Winter with a prescription. When Dr. Winter opened his mouth to speak, his features underwent a third transformation, and his voice sounded like her mother's. At last the weary girl understood that her mother was really speaking to her, and stepped from her low bed, at her parent's side, for it was broad day.

She gave her mother the slight refreshment for which she had asked, and watched in silent

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thankfulness as the features of the invalid were composed again to quiet slumber, the harbinger of returning health. No more did feverish and hurried breathing mark distress—nor did the eyelids start open, or betray the pupils uneasily rolling from side to side beneath them—but calm and placid as an infant she fell away to sleep, and her lips parted with a quiet smile. Eleanor knelt to Him who had thus blessed and rewarded her devoted care—and could Dr. Winter have stolen a glance then at her upturned face, as a ray of the morning sun played upon it, he would have pronounced the heart which animated that countenance "out of danger," in this life and forever. How amiable is piety in woman—how doth it consecrate and ennoble her—giving her more than the strong man's strength—more than the infant's gentleness.

Her toilet was soon finished, though on this joyful morning she devoted to it more attention than she had permitted herself to do for many weeks. Hope, lighted her eyes, and lent a bloom to her cheeks, and her simple and neat attire set off the symmetry of a faultless form with the more effect that it was unstudied, and the owner all unconscious of her beauty. We do not mean to say that Eleanor was not aware that she was pretty—for a tolerably long life, and acquaintance with not a few women have failed to introduce to our notice any one of the sex who could be said to be literally unconscious that she was pretty. But we have known many, who, like Eleanor, have learned not to plume themselves upon a trait which is theirs without their merit or deserving; and may be lost without their fault.

In the course of the forenoon Eleanor—it was a day of events to her—received a note from Dr. Winter. The doctor in this informed her that his sister, trusting that true friendship and respect would induce the liberty to be pardoned, would call to administer to her a prescription, which, as consulting physician, he insisted upon her "taking as directed." The servant girl who brought the message showing no intention of departing, Eleanor looked at her inquiringly—

"Sure," said the girl, "the doctor tould me I was to wait."

"To wait for an answer?" and poor Eleanor sighed in spite of herself as she made one step for the *papierterie* and elegant trifles of a lady's escritoir, which a few months since were at her hand—and then remembered how misfortune had swept away all these little luxuries, with the greater necessaries. But at this moment a carriage drew up at the door, and Miss Eleanor Hartley was inquired for. In another moment a lady so like Dr. Winter that there could be no mistaking her, introduced herself, and playfully presented a scrap written, "R: Five miles of country air, and repeat on return. When taken *not* to be well shaken, but gently rolled. —WINTER."

"But my mother," hesitated Eleanor.

"Sure," said the servant girl, "that 's jist my errand."

Could Eleanor hesitate? She had too much good sense. We do not say that she showed none of the constraint of a lady receiving an obligation—but that she gracefully accepted it, and without any verbose and burthensome expressions of acknowledgment, or any awkward hesitation. When they were seated Miss Winter produced a kerchief, which she said—

"Miss Hartley must have left in the carriage when she rode in it before."

Light broke upon Eleanor. It was Dr. Winter's carriage then in which her mother and herself rode home from the auction; and when she had more than once felt that she must have seen the doctor before he came to her mother's lodgings in a professional capacity, she was not wrong, after all. Miss Winter put her perfectly at her ease. The conversation embraced no topics which could indicate that the two young ladies, who were on an equality as to advantages of position a few months before, were not so still. Eleanor, with the happy tact of woman—for the one sex in matters of graceful propriety is a century in advance of the other—conversed and demeaned herself precisely as if she had never known reverse—or as we may better express it, as if the accidents of fortune had not affected the mind. Miss Winter was delighted with her; and—but what a woman would speculate about in such a case, it is not for us to reveal.

CHAPTER IV.

THE "prescription" was repeated again and again; and after a few days Mrs. Hartley made one of the party. Dr. Winter, with admirable address kept out of sight on these occasions, sending as an apology his professional engagements; but Eleanor, while she had too much penetration not to understand his delicacy of conduct, was woman enough to know that if he cared nothing about her, he would not put himself to the trouble of all this manœuvering to avoid alarming her delicate sense of propriety. As to Miss Winter, her mind was made up from the beginning—even before she had seen Miss Hartley; and acquaintance with Eleanor led her to congratulate herself that her brother had elected so wisely and so well.

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But though Dr. Winter did not present himself on the occasions when the now fast friends rode together, he was by no means remiss in his attentions to the invalid. Never did a convalescent appear to require such assiduous attention —at least never in the eyes of a physician. Dr. Winter had crowded the regular family practitioner entirely off the course. Thus did things pass very pleasantly for several weeks. Mrs. Hartley recovered her health, and her spirits. Sure never was there such a physician as Dr. Winter. But Eleanor began to be thoughtful.

Where would this end? Miss Hartley had now time to think of the situation of herself and her parent. The small wreck of their property was insufficient to support them—and fearful inroads were made into the principal by the expenses attending her mother's illness. What was to be done?

"Eleanor," said her mother, one morning, "cannot you manage to get up for me to-day, a few of the handkerchiefs which have not been disturbed since we came to this house? Really it is of no use to have without wearing them."

Glad of any employment which could divert her thoughts, Eleanor cheerfully assented. Just as all her preparations for her day's employment were completed, Miss Winter called with the carriage. Eleanor looked at her mother, and then at the work.

"Never mind my dear," said the mother, "you must not really disappoint me. I will go and endeavor to amuse Miss Winter. She must put up with an old woman once in a while."

"Yes, Eleanor," said Miss Winter, "honor your mother, or you will never be old yourself. Stay at home, like a good girl and do your task, and you shall ride the next time I come." Miss Winter looked very roguish when she said this —but Eleanor for once in her life was too stupid to suspect anything. But she began to think, when—before the sound of the wheels was gone, in walked the doctor. He must have come in the carriage and alighted a square or two off. But even then the artless girl might have rested in her simplicity, if the doctor had not, some how or other, looked *very much confused*.

So did Eleanor. What could have been the reason? But when two mutual blunderers, by a series of suspicious accidents are thus thrown together, it is usually the case that they blunder into a very good understanding. Eleanor and the doctor too, were very much astonished when the carriage returned, after a full two hours absence.

"Well, upon my word, Mr. Charles Winter, A. M., M. D., you are a professional gentleman of high repute. You could not ride with your sister on account of your *patients*—and it is Miss Eleanor's *patience* that you have been teasing for the last two hours!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hartley, chiming in, "you gay deceiver! You could not accompany me in the carriage, because you see here and there a grey hair, the effects of your vile drugs. Time was, when I received more attention."

"Yes," said Eleanor blushing, while tears, but not of grief, filled her eyes—"and that time was at the latest about two days ago, and at sundry other occasions within the last few weeks. I am the victim of a treacherous but most shallow conspiracy, which anybody but a silly, affectionate daughter like myself, would have detected a month ago. Really ladies," and Eleanor affected to be very angry, "you have been well employed!"

"And I," said the doctor, recovering the assurance which any man would have lost under such circumstances, "shall consummate the outrage on Thursday next, in St. Stephens' Church."

"Why, Charles!" cried Eleanor.

"Indeed!" cried the mother, sinking into her chair, and laughing till the tears came— "*Charles* indeed! You have grown very familiar with my consulting physician."

"You may thank his consultations with my mother, for that," said Eleanor—"and something is also due to the management of his sister. Never was maiden so beleaguered before—an enemy in her own household, and the sister of her foe for a generalissimo of his forces to lead on the attack from without."

"I summon you then to surrender!" said Dr. Winter, laughing.

"She capitulates!" said Mrs. Hartley. Eleanor ran out of the room to relieve her full heart in her own apartment; and the doctor and his sister arranged with the mother all that remained to be determined upon.

On that day week Mrs. Eleanor Winter was established in the house from which, a few weeks before, she had accompanied her sinking parent. The doctor, when he went to the sale little imagined that a train of circumstances such as we have related, would so soon convert his bachelor domain into a happy home. He was no man to fall in love at first sight—and little thought that in endorsing Eleanor's taste by the purchase of so many of the moveables of the house, as to cause it to appear almost unchanged, he was paying a most grateful, because disinterested compliment to his future wife. Mrs. Hartley proved a most excellent head of the establishment for the young people,

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who have since introduced several still younger to her acquaintance. As to Miss Winter—she lives "right opposite," *Miss* no more—and when she boasts of her disinterested kindness in aiding her brother's match and throwing herself out of a home, he always tells her that she may return and welcome, as soon as her husband will signify his consent.

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THE LAST OFFER.
BY ANGELINE E. ALEXANDER.
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THE LAST OFFER.

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Amid the picturesque scenery of the Wyoming Valley there stood, a few years ago, a neat cottage, around which the luxuriant sweets of nature, and the tasteful trainings of art, seemed to vie with each other for the palm of beauty. It was the residence of Mrs. Malcolm, the widow of an officer of the army, and her daughter. Mrs. Malcolm had known sad reverses. She was her parent's only daughter—her brothers had no other sister, consequently she was the pet of the family; but in the days of our grandmothers the pets of the family were not spoiled as they now are. Mrs. Malcolm's mother could not see the necessity there was for girls to read and write like lawyers, while to be unable to bake a good loaf of bread, to spin the yarn, and afterward knit it into stockings, would have amounted in her opinion to unpardonable sins. Therefore her daughter was carefully trained in all the mysteries of household duties, while her mind was left without culture, except that which the schoolmaster, whom a few of the wealthier families had engaged to teach their children, boarding him about by turns, had endeavored to impress upon her by dint of long lectures about her mischievousness and strokes of the birchen ferule upon her hand, from which in those days neither age nor sex was exempt. In spite of these helps to improvement the young lady grew up a beauty, and added to her personal charms and cheerful disposition was the substantial fact of her father being one of the wealthiest farmers in the Valley. What else was wanting to constitute her the belle of Wyoming? And the belle she was. This plump, rosy-lipped, cherry-cheeked, vivacious maiden caught the fancy of Captain Malcolm, who happened to be at the Valley while on a furlough from duty. We dare not be guilty of so much injustice to the gallant captain's memory, as to suppose that the broad acres of the father gave greater zest to the daughter's charms. All we have to record is, that in due time the handsome and sprightly Ellen Armstrong became the wife of Captain Philander Malcolm, of the Washington Light Guards. Mrs. Malcolm was a happy wife; but the lapse of years brought sorrow. After the death of her father the property was divided among the heirs, and through the unintentional inadvertancy of her husband her portion became irretrievably involved. One after another she buried her children, until the youngest alone was left, and last, and most heart-rending of all, her husband fell in the service of his country during

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the last war. Time had done much toward softening the severity of Mrs. Malcolm's grief, and she still possessed a good share of the buoyancy of spirits that characterized her when young.

Toward the close of a warm day in summer, Mrs. Malcolm and her daughter were quietly seated in their plain, yet tastefully furnished parlor, the former busily engaged with her knitting, the latter giving the last delicate touches to an exquisite painting which she had sketched from an adjacent view.

"Ellen," said the mother, without raising her eyes or ceasing her work, "do you intend to be married to young Squire Hobson?"

"How do you know that I shall ever have the chance, dear mother," replied Ellen, while the mischievous dancing of her eyes, and the scarcely perceptible curl of her lip, very plainly told that it would be no grief to her if she never had.

"How do I know!—why I'm sure of it—what else would bring him here so constantly?—and I am delighted that you are about to make so excellent a match. His family has ever been one of the wealthiest and most influential in the state, and being his father's sole heir he inherits the whole of the property."

"In my opinion there are other qualifications necessary in a husband beside wealth and influence. I should want to respect and love the man whom I marry."

"Love—to be sure—well who couldn't love Squire Hobson! He's handsome, steady and rich."

"He may be all that, mother; but there is a boorishness about him, the sure evidence of an uncultivated mind, that grates harshly upon my feelings."

"Pooh, that's all nonsense! No matter how good looking, or rich, or influential a man may be now-a-days, the young ladies turn up their nose at him, unless he has a printed bit of paper, a deplomy, I believe they call it, to show that he has been inside of a college; but many a girl will repent it when it is too late. They can't all expect to marry ministers, or lawyers, or doctors, or officers. To be sure I married an officer," continued Mrs. Malcolm, while a smile of complacency spread over her features, "but such things don't happen often, and nobody else in the whole county could get him."

"Well, mother, you would not have married any other man than my father—would you?"

"How can I tell, child, when no one else ever asked me."

Ellen bent over her painting to conceal the smile she could not suppress at her mother's simple heartedness.

"But, mother," resumed Ellen, after a considerable pause, in which the old lady was doubtless meditating upon the powerful artillery of her charms which were brought to bear upon Capt. Malcolm's heart, and which actually took the citadel by storm, carrying away the commander a prisoner of war. "Why are you so anxious for me to marry? Suppose I should never change my situation, would it be a very dreadful thing?"

"Certainly, my dear—some how or other it seems a kind of disgrace to be an old maid, because everybody takes it for granted that an old maid never had an offer of marriage. If you were to be one, which I hope you will not, we might tell it a thousand times over and nobody would believe that Squire Hobson ever asked you to have him."

At this Ellen laughed outright. "That everlasting Squire Hobson again, I wish he was—"

But Ellen checked herself, for she saw from the rapidity with which her mother's fingers flew, and the wonderful lengthing of the stocking she was knitting, that her displeasure was rising proportionably.

"Please excuse me for laughing, mother; but you have so many queer notions that I cannot help it, and then our ideas of an old maid differ so. I consider an old maid to be one who thinks too much of her own happiness to marry any body rather than nobody, for I presume that any one can get some one if it is a subject their hearts are much set on."

"Oh, well! I can't argue about things as you can that has an education, for I suppose if you were to try, you could make it very clear from some of your grammer rules, that after all an old maid is a young lady of sixteen, as people who have learning can prove anything they please; but common sense teaches us that it is natural and right for all girls to marry, and I should be very glad to see you married to a good man, who was able to take care of you."

"Mother, I do believe you are getting apprehensive that Squire Hobson's will be my last offer," exclaimed the laughing Ellen, "and that probably you will have an old maid daughter. Let me see at what age do they enter the ranks —twenty-five—is it not?—well if I live until the twenty-first of next month, I shall have completed my twenty-fourth year; so you see there is some ground for your fears."

"You may laugh now; but the time is coming when you will both think and act differently. Of the many good offers you have had, not one *exactly* suited. There was young Blake, you wouldn't have him, because you did not like the expression of his eyes, or the color, I don't know which—then came Mr. Townsend, he did not suit, because he was entirely too old—(and

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he so rich too!) Mr. Jones' son was dismissed, because his father was a tyrant at home, and you were afraid the son would be like him. After him Mr.——"

"Dear mother, please stop one moment. Any one to hear you, would think your daughter had been quite a belle. You are not certain that any of the personages you have mentioned would have had me. I am sure I never asked them if they would."

"No!—nor ever gave them a chance to ask you."

"But surely my mother does not want me to marry a man who is disagreeable to me, because he is rich and influential!"

"Disagreeable!—why surely you do not think Squire Hobson disagreeable. I can tell you that many of our finest ladies would be glad to call themselves Mrs. Squire Hobson. Beside you must not expect to be exactly suited in every particular. Your head is full of some foolish notions that you read in poetry books and love stories when you went to boarding-school. I wish I had never sent you, perhaps then you would have done as I want you to do, and——"

The old lady suddenly stopped.

"Married Squire Hobson," thought Ellen in her heart; but she dared not utter it.

"Dear mother," said Ellen, "I have always endeavored to yield to your wishes, and seldom fail, except when upon the subject of marriage. I am very happy as I am, and do not want to marry. If in course of time I should desire to enter that state, I have no doubt but that a suitable companion will be sent to me."

"No there wont!" exclaimed Mrs. Malcolm with warmth; "I don't believe in sitting quietly down, folding one's hands, and then trusting in Providence to—to—to——"

"To send one a husband, would you say, mother," quickly added the laughter-loving Ellen, and with great difficulty she restrained her merriment so far as to prevent another outbreak, for, notwithstanding her filial affection, Ellen could not but enjoy her mother's embarrassment at the ridiculousness of her own idea. However, she succeeded in regaining her composure in time to discover that her mother had dropped a stitch in her knitting, a catastrophe that had occurred but once before within her recollection, and that was upon the occasion of Squire Hobson's first visit.

After Mrs. Malcolm had recovered from her confusion she laid down her work in her lap, and regarding Ellen with a look of great affection: "my child," said she, "you asked me a while ago why I was so anxious that you should marry. I will tell you why. I am growing old and feeble, and before I die I want to know that you have some one to cherish and protect you. As you well know, our means are limited. This property and the pension I receive from government is our support, the latter of which will cease at my death: hence my last hours will be embittered by the thought that I shall leave my beloved child dependent upon the cold charities of an unfeeling world. This is the reason that I anxiously desire to see you settled in life. Squire Hobson is kind-hearted, loves you, and would make a most excellent husband, even if he is not quite so polished as you wish. I could close my eyes in peace when I knew that my daughter was provided for. Now, my dear," continued Mrs. Malcolm, as she arose to leave the room, and approaching Ellen bent over and kissed her, "weigh these things well, and act as you think best."

Ellen threw her arms around her mother's neck, and kissing her over and over again, promised obedience. When Ellen Malcolm was alone, her first impulse was to indulge her feelings in tears; but this she knew would never help her to a decision, so drying away the pearly drops that were chasing each other down her cheeks, she set herself steadily to determine her future course. The fact was that Squire Hobson had that morning offered her his heart, hand and fortune, and she had promised an answer the next day. The next day had almost come, and she was still undecided.

If the reader will look back a few years with us, we may be able to understand the cause of Ellen's indecision better than she did. In the days of Ellen's childhood she had a playmate and champion, about four years older than herself, named Henry Churchill. Henry's father was the Principal of a flourishing seminary in the Valley, and from him Ellen received the first rudiments of education. The sudden death of Mr. Churchill, which was occasioned by a fall from his horse, left Henry at sixteen a dependent orphan. He immediately came to Philadelphia to seek employment, and was so fortunate as to obtain it in the store of a benevolent and kind-hearted gentleman, who received him as assistant clerk. Mr. Stephens was one of those few rich men who feel that money is not given to them to be spent in self-indulgence alone; but by mitigating the sufferings of the distressed, and assisting the honest strivings of the virtuous, he endeavored to rightly dispense the treasures with which his Maker had entrusted him. From the first Henry Churchill's appearance and general deportment pleased him, and when he found that he was an intelligent and thoughtful lad, whose morals and education had been carefully

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attended to, his interest increased. He therefore encouraged Henry to confide in him, and look upon him as a friend. Henry Churchill related to Mr. Stephens his early history, and how the death of his father had not only wrung his heart with anguish at the loss of a tender parent; but had also deprived him of the means of education, by which he had hoped to distinguish himself in some honorable profession. Still further conversation elicited the fact that the desire of Henry's soul was to enter the naval service of his country. Mr. Stephens' sympathies were enlisted, and he determined that Harry's hopes should not be disappointed. Accordingly, unknown to young Churchill, he applied for a midshipman's warrant for him, and as his influence with the government was very great the appointment was soon made. When Mr. Stephens placed the commission in Harry's hands, so perfect was his surprise, and so full his heart, that, for an instant, his feelings overcame him; but quickly recovering himself, he clasped his benefactor's hand in his, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, poured forth his gratitude in broken sentences. There was a dewiness too about Mr. Stephens' eyes as he patted Harry's hand, and told him he wanted no thanks. The consciousness of having made a deserving fellow happy was reward enough for him.

Three years from the time Henry Churchill left Wyoming Valley found him once more treading its soil, but under very different circumstances. He was then a lone and dependent orphan, with no cheering prospect for the future. Now having applied himself with diligence, he had passed his examination before the navy board with great credit, and obtained permission to visit his native place ere he entered the service of his country as acting midshipman. Three years had wrought a great change in Harry Churchill, at least so thought Ellen Malcolm. All the younger portion of the inhabitants pronounced him remarkably handsome, while the older ones peered at him over their spectacles, declaring it was wonderful that Schoolmaster Churchill's boy had turned out such a decent looking lad. Ellen Malcolm at fifteen was not quite so wise as when she reached the mature age of twenty-four, and to her fancy there lurked a world of honor in the gilt band round Harry's cap, and the still more conspicuous one upon his shoulder. And when these marks of preferment happened to be set off by a pair of dark, lustrous eyes beneath the one, and broad, manly shoulders encircled by the other, it is a matter of question whether or not they may prove dangerous to fair ladies' hearts, even when they cannot plead the youthful inexperience of fifteen. The reader will now perceive that owing to these said gilt bands and dark eyes, the host of worthies whom Mrs. Malcolm had enumerated as her daughter's suitors, had met with a polite but decided dismissal, and Squire Hobson was about to share their fate.

"What ought I to do?" said Ellen, speaking to herself, "here is a most excellent offer—a man of good principles, unblemished reputation, and able to provide for me to the extent of my wishes; and because he is not quite so refined as some others, I turn away in disgust. Indeed I do not deserve so good an offer. Besides I have no doubt but that it is the last one I shall ever have, as I presume ladies of an uncertain age are not much troubled with such things. 'Tis true I might keep twenty-four for five or six years; but then I have no certain guarantee that at their close I should be able to merge my single blessedness into a state of connubial felicity; but seriously, I wish I could love the Squire, I have tried my best to do so; but my heart refuses. What a foolish creature I am thus to displease my kind mother, and beggar myself all for a wild chimera of my brain, a silly fancy of my childish days. I wonder where my pride of character is! How supremely absurd! To love a man who has never given me the first thought; and who, on his return, will look upon me as superannuated, and as my dear mother says, would never believe that Squire Hobson had made a proposal. It is not probable that after having visited different parts of the world, and mingled with the young and beautiful of his own and other lands, that he will be likely to discover new charms in the plain country girl with whom he played when a boy. I feel my wounded self-esteem rising up to my assistance. I do hope it will cure me of this ridiculous love fancy. Now I am resolved—Henry Churchill cares not for me, and I will not care for him, or think about him any more."

Ellen Malcolm thought she was telling the truth—nay, she was sure of it; and she pronounced the words slowly and distinctly, with a slight elevation of voice, that the inanimate objects around her might witness that these were the sentiments of her heart. Poor Ellen! how little she knew of that treacherous heart of hers. Ere the echo of her words died away she had buried her face in her hands, and leaning on the table near her, yielded to a passionate burst of grief. From this indulgence she was aroused by the approach of heavy steps, and she had scarce time to dry her tears and compose herself when the portly figure of Squire Hobson darkened the door. It was a most unpropitious moment for a visit from the Squire, for

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notwithstanding Ellen's good resolutions, she had been thinking of Henry Churchill all the time she was crying, and she could not help contrasting his handsome person and polished manners with the plain, straight-forward Squire. Squire Hobson apologized for having called before the appointed time, and made an awkward attempt at an excuse about a lover's impatience. Their interview was short. Ellen in the most delicate manner possible, respectfully, but firmly declined his offer, and the Squire departed muttering to himself that if ever he was fool enough to go sparking again to another boarding-school girl, he hoped he might lose the very best horse he owned.

About two months after Mrs. Malcolm's conversation with her daughter upon her settlement in life; Ellen's resolution never again to think of Henry Churchill; and the Squire's rejection; Mrs. Malcolm returned from church one Sunday in uncommon perturbation of spirits.

"Well if that's not too bad!" said she, throwing herself upon a chair, and addressing her daughter, who had remained at home on account of a severe headache. "Who do you think is married?—but you might guess forever and not find out—such a sweep as they came up the aisle with when everybody was in their seats just to show themselves—I never heard one word of the sermon afterward. I do say it is really too much—I can hardly help crying when I think of it"—and the old lady ran on until she was compelled to pause for breath.

A faintness crept around Ellen's heart, for she felt persuaded that unknown to any one, Henry Churchill had visited the Valley, and upon this bright, rosy morning had made his appearance in church, with a young and lovely bride. However she summoned sufficient courage to inquire in a comparatively careless tone, "who it was that had created such a sensation?"

"Who was it?—you want to know, do you? Ah! but you will be sorry enough when you hear it! Why, it was Squire Hobson and his bride."

"Squire Hobson and his bride!" exclaimed Ellen, the weight being lifted from her heart, and jumping up she clapped her hands joyously, "is that all?"

"That all!" repeated her mother in amazement, who expected the least Ellen could do would be to faint, "I don't know how much more you would ask. But what makes all that dust in the road?—sure enough, if it isn't the Squire, driving round this by-road to show you his elegant, open carriage. I'll draw in the shutter and peep through the slats; just come and look at it, Ellen, isn't it splendid?" said Mrs. Malcolm, who seemed to feel a kind of pride in the equipage that might have been her own. "Only see too how her white veil and ribbons fly in the breeze, and with what an air of triumph she tosses her head as they pass the house. Ah! you ugly-looking thing!" continued the old lady, in a particularly vexed tone, "you need not turn up your little pug nose that way. It's only chance that you are sitting where you are. My Ellen wouldn't have your old husband, and so he thought that, to spite her, he would take you."

Mrs. Malcolm opened the shutter wide, and keyed her voice to a considerably higher pitch, in the hope that her words might reach the ears of the unconsciously offending Mrs. Squire Hobson.

"Well, that's some satisfaction—I hope she heard me," said Mrs. Malcolm, drawing in her head as the carriage turned a corner of the road and was lost to her view. "Ellen," exclaimed she, as her eye fell upon her daughter, the sight of whom seemed to revive the old desire of possessing the Squire and his riches, "you might have been riding there instead of that creature if you had not been such a——"

Mrs. Malcolm found that her anger was getting the better of her, so she finished her sentence by whirling out of the room, and violently slamming the door after her.

Time sped calmly on with Ellen, notwithstanding Squire Hobson used to drive his bride to church every Sunday morning in their elegant carriage. Summer with its heats melted away, and autumn's golden harvests had been gathered in. One night, later in the fall, Ellen was aroused from her peaceful slumber by a sense of suffocation. After a great effort she arose, when to her dismay she found that the room was filled with smoke. From the reflection of the blaze, the cracking of the timbers, and the shaking of the house, she comprehended all in an instant. Rushing from her own to her mother's apartment, she awakened her with the terrible words, "mother! mother! the house is on fire!—rise, or we shall be lost!" With the assistance of their servant, in whose part of the house the fire originated, and whom, at great risk to herself, Ellen at length aroused from her deep sleep, they succeeded in saving what silver they possessed, and some of their most valuable articles. Their neighbors alarmed by the light hastened to the spot, and found Mrs. Malcolm and her daughter shivering in the keen wind of a November night, and weeping over their dear home, which the devouring flames were fast consuming. Every attention that kindness could prompt was bestowed upon the sufferers, and many a generous offer made them of a home. Mrs. Malcolm

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gratefully accepted the proposal of their nearest neighbor to return with him that night and remain as long as they pleased. "Oh, Ellen!" said Mrs. Malcolm, as with sorrowful heart they pursued their way toward the house that was to shelter them, "if you had only married Squire Hobson we would not have been suffering as we now are."

Ellen's spirit was too sad to allow a smile—indeed she was not sure but that she would gladly have accepted the Squire's offer if the afflictions of this night had been foreseen. Mrs. Malcolm's youngest brother, the only near relative whom death had spared her, kindly offered a house to his sister and niece, and did every thing in his power to make them comfortable; but his wife, an illiberal and narrow-minded woman, found much fault with Mrs. Malcolm's whims, as she termed them, and expected Ellen to become a kind of waiting-maid to her and her children. This wounded the generous feelings of Mrs. Malcolm and Ellen, and dreary indeed did the long winter months pass to both. As the spring began to open, Mrs. Malcolm, who still possessed much energy of character, and whose spirit had been roused by the unfeeling treatment of her sister-in-law, informed Ellen that after consulting with her brother, she had decided upon a plan for their future maintenance, which was to sell the farm they owned in the Valley, and with the proceeds establish themselves in Philadelphia, where, by Mrs. Malcolm taking a few boarders, and Ellen teaching music and painting, they might derive a genteel and independent support. At first it seemed impossible to Ellen that her mother and herself could live in a great city like Philadelphia. The obstacles appeared insurmountable, and her heart almost fainted when she thought that upon her accomplishments they were to depend in part for sustenance; but frequent conversations with her mother and uncle lessened her fears, and she at length consented to the plan. The sale of their farm was soon effected, and everything speedily arranged for their removal to Philadelphia. An acquaintance of theirs who was coming to the city to purchase goods attended them down, and provided them with a respectable boarding-house. TO BE CONCLUDED.

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THE LAST OFFER.
BY ANGELINE E. ALEXANDER.HENRY AND ELLEN CHURCHILL.
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pg. 206

THE LAST OFFER.

BY ANGELINE E. ALEXANDER.

(CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 180.)

AMONG several letters of introduction which they brought with them, was one to Mr. Stephens, who called on the ladies soon after its presentation. The fact of their coming from the native place of his protégé, and being personally acquainted with him, not a little increased his interest in them. Although he said but little about Henry Churchill, yet the eagerness with which Ellen listened, the vivid sparkling of her eye at the mention of his name, soon gave Mr. Stephens a clue to the windings of her heart. He felt unconsciously interested in them, and determined to use his influence in their behalf. A few months after their arrival in Philadelphia found them pleasantly situated, in a retired part of the city, with Mr. Stephens and a few others as permanent boarders. Ellen had not many scholars; but the number was sufficient to render her own improvement obvious, and to allow many little indulgences to her mother and herself, which they would otherwise have been compelled to forego. Mr. Stephens' friendship was of incalculable value to them. All their plans of operation were submitted to him, and his advice, which was always cheerfully granted, was by them strictly followed. His delicacy of feeling and generosity of heart forbade him disclosing to Ellen the true light in which he stood to Henry Churchill. He merely acknowledged the fact of his being acquainted with Henry; and Ellen dared not be too particular in her inquiries, for fear of betraying the secret of her heart. She regarded Mr. Stephens as her best friend; but little dreamt of the benefits he had conferred upon the one she loved. Mr. Stephens' interest in Ellen increased as he became better acquainted with her, and feeling quite certain that he read aright the state of her heart, he determined that his influence with Henry should be used in her favor.

Rather more than a year after Mrs. Malcolm's settlement in Philadelphia, a part of the squadron arrived with which Henry Churchill had been out upon a three years cruize, and during which time he had been promoted to a lieutenancy. With heartfelt pleasure did Mr. Stephens welcome Henry to Philadelphia, and a feeling of pride swelled his benevolent breast as he gazed upon the manly form, and listened to the intelligent conversation of the young lieutenant. One morning soon after Churchill's arrival, he was comfortably seated in the counting-room of Mr. Stephens, with that gentleman for an attentive

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and pleased listener, while he was recounting the details of his cruize and fighting his battles over again. At length as Harry paused for a few moments, Mr. Stephens threw himself back in his easy chair, and regarding him with a playful look, "Harry," said he, "is it not time that you were thinking about marrying?"

"Indeed," replied Churchill, laughing, "I have scarce given the subject a thought; but since it is your wish, I do not know that I have any particular objection to turning my attention to it."

"My wish—certainly it is—I do not want you to become a lonely old bachelor like myself, with none to care for you——"

"My dear sir," interrupted Harry, "talk not so—if I might be permitted to do but half the good that you have done in this world; and to lighten a few sad hearts of their sorrow, where you have lifted the burden from hundreds, who will forever bless your name, it would be all the happiness I would ask."

"Hush—hush, Harry!—I have only done my duty," said the kind-hearted man, "and no one deserves praise for that; but," continued he, in a livelier tone, "perhaps you will feel less cordial toward me when you learn that I have selected a wife for you."

"Selected a wife for me!" repeated Harry in astonishment—"who is she?"

"The daughter of the lady with whom I board," replied Mr. Stephens, with imperturbable gravity.

Harry was silent from two causes. In the first place, he felt that he would much rather have made the selection himself; and in the next place, he was quite certain that Lieut. Henry Churchill of the United States Navy, with the prospect of greater promotion, could do much better than marry a portionless girl, who had doubtless been brought up to scorn useful employment, and to believe that her pretty face and Italian singing were to secure for her a rich and honorable husband. Not that Harry intended to marry for money *alone;* but his affections were disengaged, and it was just as convenient for him to fall in love with an amiable and interesting *rich* lady, as to fall in love with an amiable and interesting *poor* one.

"You don't seem altogether pleased with my choice," dryly remarked Mr. Stephens, who had waited some time for a reply from Harry.

"Why to confess the truth," rejoined Harry, "as we sailors would say, I have been struck so aback that it will take some time to recover; but I hope I am not to be married without seeing the lady beforehand."

"Oh, by no means!—I'll not be so hard as that," and Mr. Stephens laughed long and heartily, for Harry's evident vexation afforded him great amusement. "But," resumed Mr. Stephens, "I fear you'll make a cold sort of lover, as you are not interested enough to inquire the lady's name. However, I'll tell it to you—it is Ellen Malcolm."

"Ellen Malcolm, Ellen Malcolm," and Harry repeated the name several times slowly and distinctly, as if endeavoring to call up the reminiscences of by-gone days. At last it broke upon him. "You cannot surely mean the Ellen Malcolm that I played with when I was a little boy! Why, my dear sir, she is only three or four years younger than myself, and ought to have been on the old maids' list several years ago!"

"Henry Churchill," said Mr. Stephens, in a stern voice, accompanied by a look of displeasure, with which he had never before regarded Harry—"if you have so far forgotten the character of a gentleman as to speak lightly of a lady, recollect that I will not listen to such language, especially when applied to one whom I respect as highly as I do Ellen Malcolm."

Both gentlemen were silent for some time. Mr. Stephens, with whom anger never lasted long, was the first to recover his good humor and his conversational powers.

"Harry," said he, "I have no wish to force upon you any choice of mine; but if you would like to renew your acquaintance with an early friend, I shall be happy to present you to her."

"I should be much pleased to see Miss Malcolm again, and I am very sorry indeed that you misunderstood the remark I just now made."

"Well—well, let that pass—we'll think no more about it. Do you call here at eight o'clock and I will take you up home with me. I want you to wear your undress uniform, and mind you look your best. Oh! I came near forgetting a very important part. As Ellen is of rather a nervous temperment, it might unsettle her equanimity to have the Harry Churchill of other days ushered in upon her in the form of such a queer, bachelor-like fellow as you; so I shall drop your surname, and present you as Lieutenant Henry. Now don't you fall in love right away, or spoil all by some hot-brained mistake of yours."

Churchill promised obedience, and with a heavier heart than he had carried about him for some time, left Mr. Stephens' office. He sauntered up one street and down another to walk off his vexation, and sighed deeply as he stole an admiring glance at every lovely face he met. He felt quite certain that Mr. Stephens had determined on his marrying Miss Malcolm.

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To this he was decidedly opposed, being very much inclined to dispose of his own heart in his own way; but then to grieve Mr. Stephens was out of the question—what was he to do? Now Harry Churchill was a brave fellow. He had travelled along a rough road to distinction; he had encountered storms by sea and land, and quailed not; he had been in skirmishes and seiges, and acquitted himself with honor; but never before had he been in such a dilemma as the present; now he was the besieged, without even the prospect of being able to cover his retreat honorably. However, Lieut. Churchill was no coward, and after struggling through a few of the darkest clouds, the horizon of his hopes began to brighten.

"Well!" said he to himself, "there is some consolation left. As I am in the service of my country I shall never be for a long time in one place, and if matters do come to the worst I shall hope to be ordered out on a three, or for aught I care, a dozen years cruize; and when 'once more on the deck I stand, of my own swift gliding craft,' I can make my best bow, and bid good bye to Mrs. Lieut. Churchill."

Harry had by this time reached his apartment at the hotel, and throwing himself upon one of the lounges, prepared to doze away the hour before dinner. All at once he started to his feet, and striking his hand upon his forehead. "The very thing," said he aloud, "where were my wits that I did not think of it sooner? If it could be accomplished I should be entirely out of the scrape. Let me see, I can tell her age exactly. I am twenty-nine, and she is about four years younger, that makes her twenty-five —an awkward corner for an unmarried lady. I don't know Mr. Stephens' age precisely; but that has nothing to do with it, a woman *ought* to be a great deal younger than her husband, in order to secure his unchanging love for her amid the 'wear and tear' of years. Besides I know from my own and the experience of others that Mr. Stephens is one of the best of men, and possesses a young heart if his head is somewhat silvered, and then too he is so interested in her that I am sure he could easily divert his affections from the channel of friendship into that of love, and what an excellent husband he would make—indeed, the lady would have cause to bless the fortunate stars that delivered her from such a roving, restless fellow as I am, and instead sent her one as affectionate and devoted as Mr. Stephens would be. Well, I think I was sent here, just at this time, to confer happiness upon all parties."

And so delighted was Harry with his plan that he forgot his drowsiness, and with a light, quick step paced his apartment, whistling one of his ward-room airs.

Eight o'clock found Lieutenant Churchill true to his appointment, and with Mr. Stephens he was soon pursuing his way to Mrs. Malcolm's. It was a warm, delicious evening, in the latter part of spring, and on arriving at the house they found the hall door open. It being Mr. Stephens' house, he entered without giving any notice of their approach. At the parlor door, which was partly open, he paused that Harry might view the beautiful tableau within. A tastefully shaded lamp flung its softened rays over the elegantly bound volumes, and vase of delicate flowers that graced the centre-table, at one side of which sat Mrs. Malcolm with her knitting, while opposite to her was a young lady employed in drawing from one of the beautiful books before her. She wore a dress of simple white muslin, confined at the throat and waist by a blue ribbon. A few sprigs of jessamine had been intwined among her curls to restrain their profusion; but the more luxuriant of them had broken the delicate tenure, and at each movement of the beautifully shaped head fell around her, almost entirely concealing her features; but the graceful contour of her form, and the small, beautiful hand that lay upon the paper almost rivalling its whiteness, told Harry that the face was in keeping. Mr. Stephens opened the door and advanced into the room, followed by his friend, whom he presented, first to the mother, and then to the daughter, as Lieutenant Henry. There was something in the lieutenant's eyes that sent the tell-tale blood rushing to Ellen's heart, and back again to her temples with a rapidity which the simple fact of being introduced to a stranger by no means demanded. But Ellen soon recovered her self-possession, for as she very truly thought, what possible connection could there be between Lieutenant Henry, in Philadelphia, and Midshipman Churchill, at ——, she knew not where; for as yet she was uninformed of Harry's promotion or arrival. As for the lieutenant, he never behaved so awkwardly in his life, for he almost stumbled over an exquisitely wrought ottoman in reaching the chair Mr. Stephens had placed for him. After the compliments of the evening were passed conversation took a more extended turn. Amusements, literature, and even the sciences were glanced at, and upon every topic that was introduced Ellen conversed with ease and propriety. This general interchange of thoughts and opinions was maintained almost entirely by Ellen and Mr. Stephens; astonishment and new emotions rendering Harry quite taciturn. At first he

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thought the young lady before him must be a younger daughter of Mrs. Malcolm, although he remembered none such; but upon this point he was soon set at rest, by the mother and Mr. Stephens addressing her as Ellen. Was it possible, the ten years that had left many a line of care upon his brow, had glided so gently over her head as not to leave a trace behind; and then too her conversation and manners were so refined and lady-like—Harry was puzzled.

Ellen Malcolm's constitution was healthful, and being always accustomed to free exercise in the open air, and possessing a contented and cheerful disposition, she looked much younger than many a girl of nineteen who confines herself to the heated atmosphere of the house, tending imaginary diseases that arise solely from the want of employment. During the evening Mr. Stephens casually remarked to Lieut. Henry that he had a young friend named Churchill, a midshipman in the navy, of whom he would be glad to obtain information. There was a trembling among Ellen's ringlets just at this time, and necessity demanded that she should bend very low over her book to examine more closely the delicate stems of the flowers she had been drawing, and when Lieutenant Henry told Mr. Stephens that he was well acquainted with Churchill, and had seen him just before he sailed for home, the agitation of the curls was again quite perceptible. This was peculiarly gratifying to Harry; but alas, a new source of anguish was fast gaining strength in his mind. Not five hours before he had planned with delight the union of Mr. Stephens and Miss Malcolm; now the very thought was more than he could endure. He drew a contrast between Mr. Stephens and himself, and in his estimation his friend possessed the advantage. And then too Ellen's respect for Mr. Stephens, and her deference to his opinions alarmed Harry. Miss Malcolm was too sensible a woman to prefer the glitter of gilt cap and shoulder bands to real worth, perhaps that was the reason Mr. Stephens requested him to wear his undress uniform—Harry heartily wished it at home. Ellen in accepting Mr. Stephens would become the idol of one who possessed influence, respectability and wealth, while he had nothing to offer but his good name and his profession. These thoughts pressed heavily upon Harry's heart, and it was with feelings he dared not analyze that he saw his friend and benefactor lead Miss Malcolm to the piano. Ellen had never learned Italian singing, and if she had Harry could not have understood it; but he fully appreciated the sentiment of a chaste, English ballad, or the touching melody of a Swiss air. The events of this evening had been to Harry Churchill like the shifting scenes of a diorama, and had wrought a wonderful change in him. Hitherto ambition had been the ruling passion of his life. To rise in his profession was the goal he had set before him, and for the accomplishment of this one object every power of his talented and finely cultivated mind was directed. The appearance and manners of Ellen Malcolm had moved upon the depths of his spirit, awakening feelings of a strange and delicious nature. As he listened to her sweet warblings the happy spirit of other days stole over him. He thought of his father—he visited again the haunts of his boyhood—he was once more stealing a half-reluctant and half-consenting kiss from pretty little Elly Malcolm, in the play of "Copenhagen" or "Blind-Man's Buff." Oh! there is a beauty and freshness in the recollections of early days, that the corroding and suspicious cares of the world can never obliterate; and Harry Churchill's heart was fast melting beneath this blessed influence. Acting from the impulse of this delicious reverie, and apparently unconscious of the presence of others, he arose, approached the piano, and bending over Ellen, asked in tones expressive of the deepest feeling, if she would sing a favorite air of his, mentioning one that she had often sung for him while they were wandering together in their native valley. This revealed all.

"Harry Churchill!" exclaimed Ellen, in undisguised astonishment and delight as she started from her seat.

"What of him?" echoed Mrs. Malcolm.

"Confound you, Harry!" chimed in Mr. Stephens, with a vain attempt to look displeased. "I told you that you did not know how to behave properly."

"Indeed, I could not help it," said Harry meekly, in extenuation of his fault, while his eyes rested upon Ellen in a look that caused hers to seek the keys of the piano. After Mrs. Malcolm had assured herself of Harry's identity, they drew around the centre-table to talk about "old times," as Mrs. Malcolm termed it. Every event of importance that had transpired within the last ten years was faithfully recounted by that lady, who found in Harry a most patient listener. "And how are all our old friends in the Valley?" resumed Harry, after a short pause.

"All well, the last time I heard from them," replied Mrs. Malcolm. "Oh! by the bye, you remember Squire Hobson, don't you?"

"Squire Hobson! oh, perfectly well—what of him, Mrs. Malcolm?" rejoined Churchill, who had been informed by Mr. Stephens that Squire Hobson's offer was Mrs. Malcolm's hobby, and

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now asked the question in order to draw from Mrs. Malcolm the particulars, that he might feed his passion upon Ellen's quiet blushes and evident confusion; but just at this moment, to Ellen's great relief, who dreaded a full history of the Squire's courtship and rejection, a servant appeared at the door with the announcement that some person wished to see Mrs. Malcolm immediately, so the lady was obliged to leave; but she consoled herself that upon the very first opportunity she would tell Harry all about it; "for he should see," as she said to herself, "that if Ellen was determined to be an old maid it was her own fault." Soon after Mrs. Malcolm's withdrawal, Mr. Stephens happened to recollect some very important business that required his immediate attention. When Harry was left alone with Ellen, he doubtless found eloquent words with which to clothe the story of his love, for three months from that night a select party of friends were assembled in Mrs. Malcolm's parlors to offer their congratulations to Lieut. Churchill and his bride. Mr. Stephens' benign countenance beamed with happiness, and tears of joy gathered in his eyes as he warmly grasped the hand of the groom, and pressed his lips upon the forehead of the bride. As to Mrs. Malcolm her delight almost exceeded the bounds of propriety. Her daughter was positively married, and better than all to an officer, and to this day the old lady advises all young ladies to wait for The Last Offer.

Early the next morning the happy couple set off on a bridal trip to Niagara. On entering his own apartment soon after their departure, Mr. Stephens' attention was attracted by a very large and elegantly bound volume on his dressing-table. What was his surprise on opening it to find the most exquisite engraving of scenes in his own, and the history of those in whom he had so long been interested. The first picture represented himself receiving Henry Churchill, a dejected and melancholy looking lad into his employ. The next scene was the heart cheering one of Harry's gratitude when he presented to him the midshipman's warrant. Turning the leaf a charming dwelling, quite embowered in shrubbery, met his view, which he at once conjectured was a picture of what had been Mrs. Malcolm and Ellen's residence in the Wyoming Valley. Following this was a vivid representation of this beautiful Valley home wrapped in flames, and the stricken mother and daughter bowed with grief; while hovering around them as a guardian spirit he could faintly trace the outlines of his own likeness. The next in order was when Harry forgot that he was Lieutenant Henry and disclosed his true character. The last of all exhibited Harry and Ellen kneeling at the altar, with Mr. Stephens' hands laid upon their heads bestowing his blessing. They had been drawn by Ellen at Harry's request, who had them engraved in the utmost perfection of style and superbly bound. It was a touching and delicate gift, and Mr. Stephens gazed on it until the emotions of his soul filled his eyes. On the first page of the volume the following lines were written:—

To our best friend and mutual benefactor we respectfully present this memento of our gratitude and love, in regard for his generosity and benovolence of heart in cherishing and encouraging us when suffering from adverse circumstances; praying that the richest of Heaven's blessing may rest upon him, and long as our spirits live we will revere and bless the name of Francis Stephens.

HENRY AND ELLEN CHURCHILL.

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FANNY'S FLIRTATION.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

"ENGAGED to Mr. Stuart!"

"Yes, sir."

"To dance the next set!"

"Why not?" and as she spoke, the fair Fanny saucily tossed her head.

The speakers were Fanny Fraley, the belle of Coralton, and Charles Beaumont, the handsomest young lawyer of the place. The lady was in the very hey-day of youth and beauty, the centre of admiration, with high animal spirits, and fascinating powers of conversation. The gentleman was also a superior person. Already, at the age of twenty-three, he held a prominent position at the bar, and was universally courted for his affability and eloquence.

He and Fanny had known each other for more than two years. The acquaintance, during that period, had ripened into a close intimacy, the result of a similarity of taste, and a secret consciousness on the part of each that the other, alone of all the crowd, was an equal in intellect. Without a word of what is called love having ever passed between them, they yet perfectly understood each other; and if Fanny blushed in secret with joy at her conquest, Beaumont was not less proud of the affection he had inspired. Scarcely an evening passed in which they were not together. Their friends regarded it as a match, and even went so far as to speculate on the wedding day.

Fanny had but a single fault—she was proud. The very day on which our story opens, an acquaintance had repeated in her presence a remark of some busy gossip, to the effect that Fanny had been too easily won, that she had in fact courted Beaumont. Though the calumny came from one whose opinion a girl of Fanny's intellect ought to have despised, yet she allowed herself to be affected by it. Her pride took the alarm at once.

That evening she was to accompany Beaumont to a party. For some time he had been her sole attendant on such occasions: his services were tacitly tendered, and accepted in the same manner as a matter of course. It had been his practice also to dance the first set with Fanny. He never, at least not of late, took the precaution to engage her hand by a formal request beforehand; but always, when the dance was called, approached and led her out as by an understood arrangement. On such occasions Fanny, if asked to dance by another, answered that she was engaged for the first set. But, on this evening, giving way to her pride, she accepted the invitation, and when Beaumont, as usual, would have led her out she answered him as above.

"Why not!" was her reply to her lover's exclamation of surprise. "Why not!" and she gave a saucy toss of the head.

"I thought you were engaged to dance the first set with me!" replied Beaumont mildly.

"I have no recollection of your asking me, or of my making such a promise."

"But has there not been a tacit understanding to that effect?"

"Since when?" and Fanny opened her large dark eyes, with an expression of admirably counterfeited surprise.

Oh! woman, woman, why will you sometimes suffer a feeling of pique, or a petty whim to let you trifle with a true and honest bosom. Fanny knew she was doing wrong even while she spoke, nor could she endure the look of mild reproach with which Beaumont regarded her: that large dark eye first lost its look of counterfeited surprise, and then fell to the ground.

"Fanny!" said Beaumont.

She did not look up, but she tapped her fingers with her fan, while her pretty lip pouted.

"Fanny!" repeated Beaumont, in an earnest tone, "you cannot be serious—or have I misunderstood you? Surely you have not been trifling with my affections?"

"Sir!—you presume—" said Fanny, his tone of slight rebuke reddening her face with anger. "Thank heaven, you have no right yet to tyrannize over me, and——"

Perhaps conscience made her pause, perhaps she only ceased because others approached; for at that moment Mr. Stuart came up, and bowing haughtily to her lover, she took her partner's hand and joined the dance.

What language can describe Beaumont's feelings? Never before had there been the slightest difference between Fanny and himself. He knew not what to think! Now he attributed her conduct to whim, now he imagined she had heard something against him. On a review of his conduct he came to the conclusion that, perhaps, he had been too exacting in his conduct, or too severe in his language. Accordingly he resolved to have a full and frank explanation with her before the close of the evening.

But this he found impossible. As if divining his intention and resolved to defeat it, she avoided even catching his eye, and pretended to be absorbed in Mr. Stuart's conversation and that of others of her admirers. Never had she been more brilliant in repartee: she kept a crowd of gentlemen around her continually; and Beaumont found that it would be impossible to ex-

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change even a syllable in private with her. Stung to desperation he approached at last, just as the company was retiring, and said,

"Shall I attend you home?"

Had Fanny been just, these words offering, as they did, an opportunity for explanation, would have terminated the incipient quarrel; but a wilful perversity possessed her on that evening; and she answered with disdain.

"No, I thank you, *Mr.* Beaumont. I shall trust myself to no one, this evening, but Mr. Stuart. You will be my cavalier!" she said, addressing the last named individual, who delightedly accepted the honor.

Beaumont retired really angry. Yet he could not believe that Fanny had intentionally trifled with his affections. He knew her to be of too noble a nature for a coquet. Still, she was unjust, terribly unjust; and he felt he had a right to be angry.

The next morning, however, he called at her house, resolved to make one last effort at an explanation. He found Mr. Stuart there, and on this person Fanny bestowed her almost sole attention. The truth was she felt keenly she had been unjust to her lover the preceding evening; but in the presence of a third party, especially of one cognizant of the quarrel, she would not admit this. Pride, pride! Stung by her cold and distant demeanor Beaumont soon left the house, vowing to himself never to return.

Scarcely, however, had Mr. Stuart gone than Fanny, now conscious of the amount of her injustice, and also aware of Beaumont's high spirit when once aroused, flung herself on her bed in an agony of tears. She would have given much to have recalled the last twenty-four hours. Yet, so perverse is the human heart, that when she met Beaumont at a party, as she did that very evening, she studiously avoided him, when a word, nay! even a look would have brought him to her side in spite of his anger. But she devoted herself almost exclusively to Mr. Stuart, as on the preceding evening.

For weeks the flirtation, thus began in a moment of folly and perverseness, was persevered in through pride. Nightly Fanny met Beaumont in society, and there gave herself up to the attentions of others; and nightly she returned home to weep bitter tears of remorse in the seclusion of her chamber. But pride would not allow her to retrace her steps.

At length Beaumont, who had lingered in the vain hope that Fanny would recall him, resolved to put in execution a plan he had long conceived for visiting Europe, hoping that absence would cure his passion. Indeed his judgment and his love had long been at war: he felt that one who could be as unjust as Fanny ought not to be his wife; yet a secret belief that she knew she had done wrong, and repented of her conduct, kept alive the flame of affection in his heart. But when he found that she made no overtures for a reconciliation, he determined to tear her image from his memory, and chose this European tour that absence might assist his efforts.

Fanny heard of his departure with agony of heart. Of late she had hoped that some accident would bring about an explanation; for the first overture she was determined never to make. But now, when this last hope was destroyed by his sailing, she wept for hours in remorseful grief.

"I shall never see him again," she exclaimed. "He despises me, I know. And I have flung away a noble heart through my own perverseness, when a word from me would have brought him to my feet—but I would die before I would utter that word!"

"Farewell forever," said Beaumont, leaning over the side of the ship, and looking back on the receding land. "Farewell, Fanny, once so dearly loved. But for this one fault of your character you would have been the noblest of your sex."

A year passed, during which no tidings of Beaumont were received at Coralton. Fanny, meantime, was besieged by admirers, and in the intoxication of vanity, sought to forget her remorse and grief. She became in fact a confirmed coquette. Having no heart to lose, she engaged in flirtation after flirtation without fear; and thus one fatal act of that kind became the fertile parent of numerous others. Mr. Stuart, after due time, proposed, but received a courteous dismissal: others, who in turn were encouraged, in turn were rejected. And thus did an originally fine nature, misled into one deed of folly, by persisting in it bring unhappiness on itself and pervert its own goodness. It was in revenge for herself that she flirted, Fanny persuaded herself to think.

What was Beaumont doing in the meantime? He was striving to cure himself of his passion, by engrossing his attention with travel among those glorious lands where genius and art had birth. He had not left America until satisfied that a longer continuance of his love would be weak and wrong; and now he resolved not to return until he could do so with a free heart.

He came back at length. What he heard of Fanny fully justified him in his resolution: a woman who, for any reason, could become a confirmed coquet was not fit to be his wife. He listened to the mention of her name without emotion, and even when he met her he did so without the slightest throbbing of heart.

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Beaumont has long been married to a wife every way worthy of him. Fanny is still unwedded. She has never loved but the once. Enough of her original nobleness of character remains to have prevented her marrying where her heart could not accompany her hand; but she is nevertheless the most accomplished coquet of Coralton; what was begun in revenge is now persisted in from habit; and thus she, who might have been a happy wife and almost a perfect woman, is discontented and heartless, and all through one fatal FLIRTATION.

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MARRIED FROM SPITE.

BY GRACE MANNERS.

"Well, Virginia, where have you been these two hours?" exclaimed Mary Warrington to her sister; "it could not have taken you all this time to purchase the ribbon you wanted, and here have I been waiting like 'patience on a monument' to make up the bows for your dress with it. But what is the matter, you look worried?"

"Worried," said Virginia, her very beautiful face clouded with a strong expression of vexation, and tossing the roll of ribbon into her sister's hands as she spoke, "I am not only worried, but angry, jealous, covetous and decidedly mercenary, and all these beautiful passions I have picked up in my walk."

"A very pleasant family party to entertain," replied Mary, "and pray may I ask what brought so many bad feelings upon you all at once; you seemed contented enough when you went out, and if it were not for your unhappy looks, I should think this was one of your usual thoughtless speeches. Begin your confession while I finish your dress, and when you see how pretty it looks, and you have unburdened your heart, you will perhaps be in a better mood."

"I hate to see you staring so at my dress," said Virginia—"I hate to slave at it myself—I hate having to do it, and I have made a desperate and firm resolution that I will no longer be among the disinterested of the earth who do not care for wealth; but will seek for it, and get all the good and grandeur and ease, and consequence it brings."

"Virginia," said her sister, in utter consternation at this speech, accompanied as it was by a passion of tears, "what has distressed you so much? I am shocked at your bitterness of spirit; where have you been, and what have you heard? Come, dear child, stop these sobs; unburden your heart to me, and I will comfort you."

"I did not tell you I wanted comfort, did I?" said Virginia, smiling hysterically through her tears. "I said I wanted riches, and they will give comfort and everything else. But now that I have parted with that lump in my throat that was nearly choking me, I will tell you the reason how those seven devils that frightened you so got possession of my breast. I went out for the ribbon, very tired as you know with finishing off that dress that the mantua-maker left half done yesterday; I found what suited me directly, and was coming home when I met Julia Smith at her own door. After a few remarks about the ball to-night, she begged me to go in with her and see the dress she was going to wear, that Miss W—— had just sent home. I went in with her and up into her room, and everything there was so elegant and luxurious that this looks like a shabby dungeon," and she glanced with an air of disgust around the plain, but neat and comfortable room in which she was sitting.

"Is that all?" said Mary. "Have her large mirrors and velvet carpets, and elegant dress been the cause of all this trouble?—fie, Virginia. Did you see the mistress of all this elegance, her mother?—perhaps you will be digusted with yours after seeing Mrs. Smith."

"Oh, Mary," said Virginia, "how foolish you are. I did see Mrs. Smith, and I cannot help laughing when I think of her. I *heard* her before I saw her, for she came up stairs calling at every turn 'Mirandy, Mirandy, are you *deaf?*' and before poor Julia could reach the door to answer that her sister was out, or to prevent her from coming in, which, judging from her mortified look, she would gladly have done, her mother walked into the room. She made a bob that was intended for a curtsy as Julia introduced me, and then smoothing an old lead colored shawl that was round her shoulders, and fixing one of those most abominable of all wash-saving articles a black net cap, she seated herself in a rocking-chair, and began the conversation by asking me if I was going to Mrs. Martland's to-night; if I had a new dress, telling me what Julia's cost, and finally the price of every article of furniture in the room. I tried to turn the conversation as her daughter looked so distressed—but no; on she went, until among other pieces of information, she told me 'that Mirandy was soon a going to be engaged to be married,' and to whom do you think?—to Alfred Hammond!"

"You did not believe her, Virginia? you could not—he so devoted to you. It is some imagination of this vulgar old woman."

"I did not at first, though I know while we did not go out on account of our mourning, he used to flirt with her, as he always called it, a great deal; but as I was going away I met the servant on the stairs with a magnificent bouquet for her, with his card attached to it, as Mrs. Smith displayed to me, and I met him in the street with her directly afterward, evidently returning from a long walk. He looked confused, and while she stopped and was talking to me he never uttered a syllable. All this shows it is more than a mere flirtation, and indeed how could he want to flirt with such an ugly, uninteresting girl?"

"I cannot think so badly of him," said Mary. "At any rate if it is so he is not worth one sigh from a girl like you, and if he is willing to give

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up his love for you, and connect himself for money to such very common people as these Smiths, he is not worth grieving about."

"Sigh for him?—grieve for him?" exclaimed Virginia, her eyes sparkling, and her cheeks burning with indignation. "No, I will not give him one sigh or tear again—but I will be beforehand with him; I too will have wealth and splendor that shall outshine his, ay, and without vulgarity too. I will marry that fool Aylmer that I refused last summer, and that before this winter passes over."

"Marry Aylmer, Virginia—marry that almost idiot? You dare not—you shall not do it."

"I both dare and will, Mary. I know him to be a fool—but will I mind that, not caring for him? His folly cannot run away with his wealth, as that is all secured for him, thanks to the wisdom of his father—and as happiness from love is out of my reach, I will try what wealth and consequence will do for me. Aylmer is in town now, and this night I will bring him on again. Not a word, Mary—not a word. I am desperate and determined."

"Now I dare say you are," said Mary, "and, therefore, I shall say no more to you—but to-morrow I hope better things of you. To marry a fool for spite!—the bare thought of such a sacrifice is most horrible."

"Horrible or not," replied Virginia, "I mean to do it. If my heart is to be a source of torment to me, it shall be hidden under a glittering veil at all events—so now to dress for the ball and Aylmer."

It seemed as if fate had determined to aid Virginia in her passionate and self-revengeful determination; for while dressing for the evening a magnificent bouquet, far exceeding in splendor that of her recreant lover to Miss Miranda Smith, was brought to her by the servant. It bore no name, but the writing and a few lines "begging her acceptance of it, although most unworthy of the shrine at which it was offered," convinced her it came from her rejected suitor, Mr. Aylmer: who thus showed he bore no lasting malice, and gave her the opening she wished for again encouraging his attentions. "At all events, Mary," said she, as she was placing the flowers in her bouquet-holder, "he is a fool of taste, and that will hide a multitude of sins."

"He admires you, Virginia, and, therefore, no one can doubt his taste; and though I had much rather the flowers had not come from him, still they finish your costume most beautifully" And lovely indeed looked the indignant beauty in her ball attire. Her dress of spotless white satin, with a double skirt of transparent tulle floating over it, looped up at each side with a knot of ribbon; her rich brown hair, braided simply on her forehead, and confined at the back of her head with a wreath of white flowers; her large hazel eyes sparkling, and her color brilliant with excitement, made her beauty even more dazzling than usual.

Oh! woman—woman, of how much unhappiness, bitterness, and despair is that little organ *the heart*, full often the seat. Oh! love!—love! if thou art the sweetner of human life to some, of how many more art thou the scourge, the tormentor?—how many miseries are suffered under thy reign, and under what deep impenetrable evils? Who would have dreamed while looking at that bright, joyous being with a brow smooth as alabaster, a mouth dimpled with smiles, and apparent glee ringing forth in her musical laugh, that she was a prey to bitterness of heart unspeakable, and that the demons of outraged affection, wounded pride and deceived love were all whispering revenge, and that she was giving ear to their suggestions?

With her aching and bitterness of heart hidden under her gay and beautiful attire, Virginia proceeded to her evening's engagement—not the first gay deceiver nor the last either who have danced at such gay scenes, with feet light and agile as zephyrs, and hearts heavier than lead. At the entrance of the drawing-room she was met by Mr. Aylmer, and as his eye fell on the bouquet so conspicuous for its beauty it brightened with triumph, and Virginia said to herself "*thou* art the man." There was nothing left for her to do in furtherance of her plan but to receive graciously the devotions of her once rejected, and now as ever despised admirer. Her recreant lover was there, and to her great and unspeakable joy, wrong and bad as was the feeling, his indifference to Miss Smith and his forced gallantries were too obvious to be mistaken. True, there was the bouquet most carefully displayed; true, the long walk and its delights were retailed to her by the lady; but there stood the gentleman looking most "*distrait*," and casting furious looks at the favored and happy Aylmer. This but added to Virginia's spirit and enabled her to dance with Hammond, to banter him on his reported engagement, and to send him off in a fury of jealous rage with her, and the deepest disgust toward the coarse and vulgar Miss Miranda, to whom he was too far both publicly and privately committed to recede. He attended the latter to her carriage in no very gracious mood just as Virginia, looking most lovely in her bewitching scarlet *Rachel*, and smiling most sweetly on Aylmer, was handed into hers by him, and then took himself off stamping

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and storming at Miss Smith, Virginia, Aylmer, himself, and the whole world. And whose was the fault? His own.

And how fared Virginia in the privacy of her apartment, with the false excitement of her spirits all gone, her body fatigued, her mind faded with exertion? She rushed to her room, and flinging the bouquet far from her, threw herself on a lounge, and burst into a passion of grief that terrified her sister who stood by her. In vain Mary tried to comfort her by caresses, by endearments—she could not whisper "hope" to her, for she believed in Hammond's engagement, but she talked of resignation and submission to the crushed heart beside her—but in vain. At last she said—"at all events, dearest Virginia, you see from your suffering to-night how vain your determination of taking means to revenge yourself on him—you cannot do it, and I trust you will never again carry on the game you did to-night. I talked to Aylmer some time, and depend upon it you will be infinitely more miserable as his wife than in bearing your sorrow with us, who all love you so dearly."

"No," said Virginia, "I have not changed my mind in the least—the anguish of to-night will never be repeated—the first blow on the rack is said to be the stunning one, and after this I shall have nerves of iron. I saw plainly the rage Alfred was in to-night, and how he despises those Smiths; but he shall not see, or think even that his feelings are anything to me. I promised Mr. Aylmer to drive with him in his sleigh to-morrow, and before a week I shall be engaged to him if I choose it—and then Alfred may comfort himself with Miss Miranda and her elegant mother. If I do sacrifice myself it is to a gentleman by birth, who, if he has not brains, has at least an agreeable family to introduce me to; while he gets neither brains or connexion. Oh! Alfred—Alfred, who would have believed it of you?"

Wilfully and blindly did Virginia pursue her plan. In spite of the entreaties of her sister, of the gentle remonstrance of her mother, of the ridicule of her brothers, (her father was dead) she permitted the attentions of a man she despised, and before a fortnight had gone by, before Hammond's engagement was announced, she accepted Mr. Aylmer, a talking, boasting, obstinate fool, and she an intelligent, accomplished, high-spirited woman. How soon she experienced the truth of the saying, "that a fool is the hardest of all things in the world to govern," her story will tell.

Her first and greatest triumph and trial was being present as *an old friend* at Hammond's marriage, which took place about a fortnight before her own; and a more spiritless bridegroom never took those solemn vows. His bride, coarse and vulgar in manners and appearance, and overloaded with finery, was unfavorably contrasted with Virginia, who, most exquisitely dressed, and looking, he thought, more lovely than ever, stood just before him, and, without a trace of emotion on her face, saw him give his hand to another, while he felt his heart to be wholly hers. But greater even than this, was the trial to him of witnessing her marriage, and by that means to be surrounded by all those elegancies and luxuries she would so well adorn, and that he had so often wished he had to offer to her acceptance. But for these he had now sold himself to another, and the withering thought came over him if perhaps he had not sacrificed her happiness as well as his own. But no, too satisfied, nay! triumphant, was the expression of her face as she stood receiving the compliments of her friends. Diamonds flashing from her brow, sparkling on her neck, and glittering on her fingers, the magnificent gifts of her husband and his family, so brilliant and joyous was her whole appearance, that no such doubtful thought could be entertained, and with a muttered execration at *her* heartlessness, he forced his way through the crowd, and offered his congratulations to the envied groom, though feeling all the time the strongest inclination to knock him down for presuming to win the bright creature he had wanted himself, but was too lazy to work for and earn the wealth he so coveted. But the die was now cast—they had each sought their fate—whatever it was to be they must abide it.

His is soon told. Sickened, disgusted with the family to which he had allied himself, having no companionship with his wife, either in thought or feeling, or pleasure in his own house, where his wife's mother ruled supreme, he passed all his time at his club. What are the usual consequences of such a way of life is well known. Cards, billiards and smoking soon led the way to debts, duns, and drinking. He never went out with his wife: never was seen with her: he had not even the poor satisfaction of making a dash with his money, as his wife did not like the trouble of entertaining. Now and then he exerted himself, and insisted on giving a dinner to his friends, which generally ended in his being carried from the table to bed, and in his being sick for a week after. The same want of principle that marked his conduct to the woman he loved, showed itself in his whole life; and if Virginia wanted revenge, she would have had enough in the entire deterioration of his

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character, without sacrificing herself on the altar of her disappointed affections.

Her career was different. She sought in the whirl and excitement of company and dissipation a refuge from thought, and from the reproaches of her conscience, whose still small voice would make itself heard, whispering of false vows, of honoring and obeying, when the heart was filled with scorn and contempt, and of hate and loathing, where there should have been love and confidence. The pride and admiration her husband had for her many charms—the presents he heaped on her—her grand house, her handsome equipage, and her brilliant entertainments, for the first few months, kept her in a state of excitement that almost banished thought, and she fancied her lot would not be so hard to bear after all. But she was not to escape so. As the novelty of her position wore off, as the season for gaiety passed over, and she was left more to her husband's society, the demon of ennui and discontent took full possession of her. Aylmer was devotedly in love with her, to the full extent of his abilities for such a sentiment, but that of all things was most disgusting to her. He was never from her side. Having nothing to do, he was always ready to go anywhere or everywhere with her, until she grew to hate the very sight of him; but having once seen him in a rage, in which he seemed like one bereft of reason, and that nearly frightened her out of her senses, she was afraid to provoke him by letting him see she did not want his company. Ashamed to own herself in the wrong, and too proud to let any one, even her sister, see her wretchedness, she was compelled to endure her torment without having even the usual female consolation of talking about it. Did she drive out, he was seated by her side—did she ride, he was at her bridle-rein. When she sang he stood opposite to her, devouring her with his eyes; and when she played he was by her, to turn over the leaves of her music. Such exclusive, solitary devotion was unbearable, and she persuaded him, as the season advanced, to go to Saratoga, though watering-places were her aversion. But anything was better than being condemned to a tête-a-tête with her husband: solitary confinement, hard-labor, Sing Sing itself would be more endurable.

To Saratoga they went, and there, by constantly being in a crowd, she in some degree got rid of his society. By resolutely closing her ears when he was talking, or conversing with volubility herself, she avoided hearing the folly he was uttering, that, in spite of her boasted indifference to him, made her cheeks tingle with shame. But to these disagreeables, hard as they were to bear, another was added that threatened to be more serious. He now, for the first time since their marriage, showed an inclination to indulge to excess in wine. At first it was a relief to her to have him spend the whole afternoon at the table, as it gave her some hours of luxurious solitude in her own apartment. But when evening after evening he appeared in the drawing-room with unsteady gait, blood-shot eyes, and inarticulate speech, and finally made himself the theme of the house by falling prostrate in one of the passages—her agony knew no bounds. Even this was not the worst of her trials, for, on remonstrating with him, though as cautiously as possible, the evil she feared occurred, and his rage broke forth in the same style that she had once before witnessed: his violence alarmed the establishment, and brought every one into the corridor where they lodged. From *her* room issued the sounds, and *his* voice in curses and abuse was but too plainly to be heard. No concealment could be used—to explain was impossible—that he was a maniac would not be believed, that he was a drunken fool was all that could be said, and this his *wife* could not promulgate herself, though all were aware of the fact. To leave the place was all she now wanted, and fortunately, enough of shame was left with him to make him willing to avoid meeting those to whom he had exposed himself. They departed that afternoon, and so ended her experiment of seeking relief in a crowd.

They returned home. And now she felt that she must take counsel with some one in her troubles. Her own family were the first to whom she turned for comfort, and great was the shock to all; but to Mary the horror of her sister's position, knowing how and why she had married, seemed fraught with evils without end.

His own family, without pretending to deny that they knew of his evil habits before, were anxious to enter into any scheme or plan that could be proposed to lessen or avert her misery. They were really grateful to Virginia for having married him, as they had always feared his being led into some disgraceful match by his folly, and they were unfeignedly sorry for her trouble. A visit to Europe was what they proposed, as having more to amuse and employ his vacant mind than anything else. Besides it would remove him from the temptations of the evil habits he had again resumed.

After another winter of outward gaiety and prosperity, but of real anguish and misery, Mr. and Mrs. Aylmer left their home for Europe. Bitterly did Virginia feel this separation from her family, and fearfully did she look forward

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to the trials she might have to undergo, unaided and alone in a foreign land. But the choice had been her own—her proud spirit still bore her up, and without imparting one half her anguish to her sister, she left her on what is usually called and felt to be a tour of pleasure.

But evil habits are things not so easily broken through, and "though you may bray a fool in a mortar, his folly will not depart from him," so crossing the ocean will not wash it out of a man, and Paris is only a wider range for the exhibition of folly than our own *once* primitive city. So Virginia found it, and the punishment she was to undergo for the fatal, false step she took in her passionate anger was not to be short. In Paris, though at first the many stirring scenes and amusements served to amuse Aylmer's vacant mind, and give him that excitement he always craved, these soon palled upon his vitiated taste, and gambling was speedily added to his other vices.

It was with the very greatest difficulty that his wife got him away, after many months of misery, on the pretext of making the usual visit to Switzerland. But she did accomplish it, and contrive to enjoy the journey also, owing to having joined some friends, of whom he stood somewhat in awe—but that was soon over, and he then insisted on going to Baden. Virginia, who well knew that if he once got into the desperate gambling set that frequent that most notorious of all German watering-places, he would be worse than ever, made a desperate effort to prevent it—but in vain. No persuasions, no entreaties could alter his determination—he only treated her to a scene of more than usual idiotic violence, and threatened to leave her where she was by herself—but that go he would.

In the end, she was obliged to yield, and before one week had been passed there, he had become a daily and nightly frequenter of the gambling saloon. Of course so rich and foolish a pidgeon was well plucked, and then drink was resorted to, to drown the recollections of his losses. There he stayed until the season was over, and then taking his wife back to Paris left her there, while he joined a party and went to Italy.

Who can depict her forlorn and most unhappy situation? Alone in Paris, with no friends, and but few acquaintances—a delicate infant added to her cares, and her only comfort a servant that she brought from home with her. She, the petted, spoiled Virginia, dependant for comfort on a menial. Letters from her husband were few and far between—her child sickened and died; and when this sad event at last brought him to her, she was terrified at the rapid increase of all his evil ways. He was now often in want of means, and scanty were the portions he dealt out to her. He could not draw upon his principal, and he anticipated his income by loans at an exorbitant interest, and the dread of poverty was added to her other troubles. The riches which she had so coveted, and which were to give her the importance she thought they would, were escaping from her grasp. Most sedulously did she conceal all this from her family, suffering in silence what she could not but feel was her just punishment.

But three years of such a life, each one bringing some evil greater than the last, was too much to be borne. Her health gave way, her spirits had vanished, her pride was humbled, and on some more than usual ill-treatment from her husband they parted. She returned home a broken-hearted, wretched woman; and he remained to finish his miserable career in Paris, as fast as all the dissipations of that most dissipated city would allow. He was obliged, of course, to make her an allowance, but mean and niggardly was that support, as debts pressed heavily upon him always.

And thus ended these two matches of revenge and mammon. Virginia, a faded, broken-hearted woman at five and twenty, and her heartless lover a cross, prematurely old sensualist. They both sold themselves—one for revenge, the other for wealth—took solemnly the falsest vows, and such was the end. But what better could be expected from such a beginning?

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THE DESERTED WIFE.

BY ALICE G. LEE.

CHAPTER I.

She pressed back the curls from her aching brow
With her fingers wan and white;
And the marriage ring, with its golden bend,
Shone out in the dim twilight.
He gave that ring as a pledge of his truth,
And he could not desert her now!
Of a promise made in the sight of Heaven,
And he could not break that vow!

Oh, no—he had only meant to try her faith by that terrible letter—it could not be that he had left her forever—it was too base an action for that noble heart; that heart in which she had reposed her happiness with a woman's pure and holy faith! As these thoughts passed rapidly through her bewildered mind, Lucy Clare looked again with straining vision through the gathering gloom of eventide, and her beautiful face was lighted by anticipation, for her ear had caught a sound, and she fancied it was the pacing of his horse upon the shaded path. Another disappointment—again her face was overclouded, as she watched the gloomy avenue in vain: no form emerged from it, horse and rider were far distant. The dark, old trees swayed heavily in the evening wind, and the dull and solemn music that they gave forth was in unison with her feelings. But save that dirge-like strain, and the lighter rustle of the ivy wreaths that draped her window, no sound came to her ear for long hours, though she started oftentimes, assured that she heard his tread upon the portico, or even upon the very threshold.

Then she turned sick-hearted from the casement, and grasping the fatal letter that had told her of her own wrong, and her husband's shame, moved to a glittering candlebra that had shed its soft light unheeded near her. There was a deep, red spot upon her cheek, and the veined lids of her soft, blue eyes, "heavy with the heart's dampness," drooped yet more as the well known characters met her view.

"Lucy—my wife! It is the last time that I shall ever call you by that hallowed name. My soul is sullied by perjury, for I have falsely broken the vow that I had made before high heaven to cherish and protect you, even with my life. Base one that I am, with that vow ringing in my ears, I leave you for another, and cast off every tie that has bound me to innocence and virtue. I dare not ask you to pray for me—even your gentle heart must curse one who has betrayed its perfect trust. But think of me sometimes, will you not?—with pity, God knows I need it even now. Do not curse me, my Lucy—mine, alas! no longer."

"And may God forgive thee! Arthur, my husband, for come what may, in life or death, we cannot be wholly divided!"

She pressed her hand convulsively to her heart as if to still its thick throbbings, while her breath came fast and painfully, till the light drops of the candlebra flashed to and fro, quivering and glittering in a thousand brilliant hues. She had grasped the gilded shaft of her harp for support while reading; but weary and exhausted, worn with watching and anxiety, her strength at last gave way; her hand loosed its hold; her heart fluttered with a quick, nervous movement, and with a long, low sob of agony she fell upon the thick carpet as if dead. Could there be life in these rigid and motionless limbs?

It was near midnight when the old housekeeper, who had in vain sought to soothe the terrible anxiety of her mistress, frightened by the unbroken silence that had so long reigned within, entered the room unbidden. The trance had given place to a disturbed and uneasy slumber; with head pillowed upon her arms, and her hair unbound falling in masses upon her bosom, Lucy Clare had for a time forgotten her misery. No, it was not wholly forgotten, for she moaned the name of her husband, and seemed begging him not to leave her *all* alone—not to destroy the happiness which lived upon his smiles and tender words. "Your own Lucy," she murmured; "call me your sweet wife; clasp me once more to your heart!"

"Poor creature—dear child," said the old lady, as she bore her slight form to the next apartment—as easily as if it had been an infant's—and when she had tenderly arranged her for the night, so gently that Lucy knew it not, she sat beside her, watching the restless movements until they gave place to a heavy slumber.

The moonbeams rested upon the forehead of the sleeper. Alas! a warmer good night kiss had been wont to rest there.

CHAPTER II.

"The beaming eye was lovely,
And the coral lip was fair,
And the gazer looked and asked not
For treachery hidden there.
——Young love at the altar
Of broken faith is sighing." S. P. SMITH.

Scarce ten years before this dream of felicity was so rudely dispelled, the bells of the village church welcomed with a merry peal the entrance of that young creature to the home now so desolate. Then a happy bride—now a deserted wife!

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And when Arthur Clare gave a mistress to the halls of his fathers, he gazed with a look of idolatry upon her; few idols were so worthy as was Lucy of the homage she received; for well might he be proud of his beautiful wife. An orphan from her earliest remembrance, she had known few to love, and the affection that had been so long repressed in her gentle heart was now yielded warmly and unreservedly, and that affection gave a soft light to her glad, blue eyes, and a tender beauty to her delicate mouth that smiled on him, who was far dearer than aught else in the wide world to her.

With no earthly sorrow, no vexing care to annoy them, what wonder that peace and love dwelt in the happy mansion. A year passed thus, and then came a serpent to their Eden. Eveline Gray was a cousin of the gentle Lucy, but she bore no resemblance to her, save that at times she could wear the same winning smile, and speak in her low, sweet voice. She was beautiful—gloriously beautiful!—and Lucy looked when near her like the gentle lily that hides its head in the green moss of the valley when placed by the gardner's hand, beside the queenly camelia that blooms for the admiration of thousands.

But the heart of the proud Eveline was false, and her nature most base and artful. She had vowed to steal from her sweet cousin the love that she in her innocence deemed unchangeable. Little did Lucy know the heart of man—little did she dream of the sorrow so near at hand, as unconsciously she aided in the very scheme her cousin had prepared; for when Eveline's white hands swept the harp strings, and her brilliant voice floated in glorious strains through the hushed room, Lucy would listen in wrapt attention and beg for another, and another song; then as Eveline, well pleased, granted the request, Lucy bade her husband mark the graceful curve of her beautiful arm, or the proud stateliness of her snowy neck "quivering in the tide of song." Strange that an angel-like form should so often enshrine the basest heart, filled with pride, passion and treachery! Lucy would have shrank from that enwreathing arm as from a serpent, could she have read the purposes of the friend whom she so trusted; her mind was too pure to comprehend guilt, such as jealous love, and wounded pride had conceived. Eveline had loved Arthur Clare, and before he met the gentle girl whom he had made his wife, she dreamed that her love was returned. She saw it was but a dream, and then her pride was roused: pride that with all her glorious beauty and her dazzling intellect, a child graceful and fairy-like it is true, but still a child in comparison with herself, should be preferred before her. She had vowed revenge, but though it was delayed, it was not the less certain.

She had studied Arthur's character. She knew that acting from impulse, though noble and affectionate, he was changeable and easily influenced. So she veiled her anger under a pleasant seeming, and when she knew that the first romance of their love was passed, she came to their home little doubting that a new object for his attentions would be gladly welcomed.

But Arthur truly loved his wife, and for a time that love was his safe-guard. There were moments when the full dreamy eyes of Eveline would be fixed on him, as she spoke bitterly of the misery of a heart that had wasted its deepest, holiest love on one who looked upon it as a stranger—when he would almost wish to press her snowy hand to his lips, his heart, and tell her that he loved her, guilty though it might be. Then the sorrowful face of her who had trusted love and life to him would float before his vision, and he would turn from the beautiful, but erring woman at his side, and seek tranquillity and safety in the sweet presence of his wife. Yet he still listened to the tempter; though for a time her image would be banished, it was but to return again, and a thousand times more radiant than before, hovering near his couch in the hush of midnight contesting still a place in his heart. Then though he saw the features of his wife lovely in the repose of calm and innocent slumber, he would turn madly away and almost hate her as a bar to his future happiness.

At last weakness and vacillation became guilt, and he fled with Eveline Gray to a foreign land, leaving in her trust and blindness the gentle Lucy, to whose unsuspecting heart the truth came with a terrible force, that for a time threatened to destroy the life that henceforth she felt would be but a burden. A life that she would gladly have yielded could she have breathed it out upon his bosom, cheered by the thought that his love was still her own.

CHAPTER III.

"Oh! wedded love—how beautiful—
How pure a thing thou art!

Nay, turn not from me that dear face—
Am I not thine—thine own loved bride—
The one, the chosen one, whose place
In life or death, is by thy side?" MOORE.

"EVELINE *I will see my husband.* You cannot, shall not detain me from his bedside. I know that he is dying—you too may deny it not—you too know that he will not see the setting of another sun. And yet I will not be driven

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away, *I*, who am his lawful wife. You will not be so cruel!"

"Lucy Clare," said Eveline, coldly and haughtily, "you have been misinformed; he has yet many years to live if you do not by your rashness hasten the death you say you would give your life to avert. I beg that at present the sick room may be undisturbed; when he awakes, if it is his wish, you shall be admitted."

"It is false—you know his life hangs by a thread, and if I see him not within the hour, they tell me I shall never listen to his voice again. Stand back—I will enter—you will drive me mad."

Ere the outstretched arm of Eveline could detain her she had flown by the astonished attendants, and with a long cry of mingled joy and terror had thrown herself beside the couch, where pale and emaciated lay the once brilliant Arthur Clare. But she started back wildly, for the face of the sleeper was like that of the dead, and the feeble breath that still fluttered to and fro disturbed not the bloodless lips.

"Oh! God, he is dead! I am too late—too late. Speak to me, dear one—look up once more!" And as if to obey these wild, heart-broken ejaculations, a faint smile stole over the wan lips, and she felt the hand that grasped his feebly pressed, while a low voice whispered—

"My wife!—do I dream?"

"No, thank heaven, it is not a dream—you live—you are awake—it is Lucy, dearest—your own Lucy, come to be with you again forever."

But the hand that for a moment he had feebly clasped was again released, and he shuddered and moaned as he turned from the deep gaze of those love-lit eyes. The thought of his great sin came to him, and he felt it was not his right to clasp that dear hand, and to listen to words of love and tenderness from her whom he had so wronged.

But his wife quickly noted the movement, and guessed the thoughts that convulsed every feature with stifled pain. She wound her fair arms around him, and supporting his drooping head as a mother would that of a tender infant, said, "turn not from me, Arthur, my beloved! What though you have sinned, repentance has been most bitter; the stain is departed; God will forgive you even as I have done."

Holy and beautiful was the picture, showing forth woman's love triumphing over pride and cruel desertion. And though Eveline Gray would have disturbed it, she dared not, but shrank back, for even her haughty spirit quailed before the scene that met her gaze. The golden rays of one of Italy's most glorious sunsets had stolen in and lingered about the couch of the dying man. The head of Arthur rested upon the bosom of his wife, and his dark spiritual eyes were fixed upon her, as if he feared that her presence was a blissful delusion, that would vanish with his waking; and she, with the sunbeams resting in the golden curls that fell over them both as a halo, and her soft, blue eyes peaceful and serene, seemed as a guardian angel come to cheer the last moments of him who would soon depart for a far land.

"My husband," murmured Lucy, as she bent over him, "wonder not that you see me with you. The tidings came that he whom I yet loved deeply and holily was dying afar among strangers, and that none but she who had ruined my peace watched over him. They said that even her love had grown cold. Then came a voice in the stillness of eventide, 'go to him—it should be your care to soothe and to serve.' I felt in my heart that you would receive me, that you would not turn from me now. So I braved the anger of friends who would have detained me from you, for they said it was unwomanly to seek one who had deserted me for another. I did not mean to speak harshly, dearest, forgive me—look up once more. Oh! I have dreamed of this hour, and now it has arrived; again and again have I thought that your clear eyes were looking with love once more into my own, that your kisses were on my lips. But that vision faded, I woke to find you far distant—but this is reality, and I am happy, oh! so happy. I fear my heart will break for very joy, for now that I am here I know the dark shadows will pass away, the hand of death *will be stayed*. You cannot die dear, dear husband."

"I am content to die my sweet Lucy, for I have once more seen that dear face, and have listened to words of forgiveness from those lips. Yes, I must die my darling, for it cannot be with us as in days of old, and I could not bear another separation. Do not leave me now—but a little while and then I shall be no more."

—

Slowly and gorgeously died away that sunset sky. Ray after ray of crimson and gold brightened, deepened, and then faded to the ashen hue that veils the whole heavens, till the moon in her midnight pathway silvers them again. And thus fitfully and slow departed the life of Arthur Clare; his last sigh was breathed folded to the heart of his long lost wife; and with the last sunset beam his spirit departed.

Is not forgiveness the holiest principle of human love?

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THE BALL OF THE INSECTS.

BY FANNY CAROL.

"OH! delightful! *a ball!* the first we have had this season—have you had an invitation? are you going?" These words were addressed to the grave Lady Humble-Bee, by the giddy young Count de Papillon, on a fine summer morning.

The whole world of insects was in commotion, for Earl Spider was to give a ball, the "first one of the season," and report said a most magnificent one too. It was to be given for the heir of Earl Spider, and his beautiful bride, sweet Katy-did, who had just returned from their wedding tour on the Continent. Among the invited guests were the Hon. F. Longshanks and son, and Baron Bluebottle, between whom and the earl there had long existed a deadly hatred: but the enemies had now become friends, and the earl was anxious to cultivate a more intimate acquaintance, which he delicately hinted by inviting the baron to be present at the coming festival. The rich old Lady-Bug, too, and her humble companion, Miss Ant, were among the number of expected friends. Count Grasshopper, who had accompanied the bride and groom some distance on their "wedding tour," had accepted an invitation from the earl. The Locust and Cricket, with a number of inferior performers, had engaged to furnish the music, and "all went merry as a marriage-bell." Earl Spider's servants, consisting of numberless Ants and Musquitoes, were furnished with "wedding favors" to wear at the supper, which was to be given after the ball.

The day appointed for the fête actually arrived without any unfortunate accident occurring to mar the expected pleasure. The weather was delightful—the sun sunk slowly to rest, and the moon rose in her glorious beauty, shedding her soft, silvery light upon the beautiful world below, giving a brighter color to every flower it touched, and a new lustre to the light ripples of the sparkling stream that flowed through the garden in which the ball was to be held. The "queen of night" rode high in the heavens when the first of the guests made his appearance on the soft green sward, where they were to "trip the light fantastic toe." It was the young Count Grasshopper, who advanced eagerly to welcome the young bride on her return to her native land. As she gracefully stepped forward to meet him the moonbeams seemed to centre near her beautiful person, as though striving to outshine the high-born beauty, and trembling as they softly kissed her sweet lips and upturned brow. She received the count graciously, expressed her joy at seeing an old friend, (he was, by the bye, a rejected lover of Lady Kate's) and chatted gaily with him until the arrival of more guests obliged her to leave him. The knight of the Beetle soon appeared, and with him the beautiful coquette, Miss Miller. It was seen plainly by every one but herself, (the one least interested!) that the young knight was fast losing his heart, and surrendering his whole happiness to her keeping. She laughed and talked merrily with him, and was, to use her own words, "carrying on a charming flirtation with him, for the poor fellow played 'the enamoured' to perfection, and bestowed on me tender glances and half-suppressed sighs, according to the most approved fashion of love-making." The conquest was completed on that memorable night. Sir Beetle never left the side of his lady love during the evening, and though she talked much to him, the poor knight could only answer her with *looks*—his head was too full for words to find utterance.

But I return to those whom we have so long neglected. The musicians exerted themselves to the utmost, and the gay couples waltzing on the soft turf kept the most perfect time, and seemed hardly to touch the earth in their graceful evolutions. Yet dancing, like everything else in this world, must have an end, and, at a given signal, the music ceased, and several servants coming forward, invited the company to partake of a "cold collation" before leaving. Each noble lord now handed his fair dame to the arbor in which the supper was prepared, and there we will leave them, while we turn to a pair who seemed feasting also, but on something less substantial than their companions. *Love* was their food, and love the subject of their conversation —they had wandered from the arbor and directed their steps to a small grove, at a short distance from the garden. These persons as you, fair reader, may have imagined, were none other than the knight of the Beetle, and the fascinating Miss Miller. His head was bent, as if to catch the low tones which flowed softly from her parted lips, as with a blushing cheek and downcast eye she replied to the ardent declaration of the knight that he "loved her, and her alone, that he lived but in her presence, and that without her, life would be valueless to him." The little coquette seemed strangely embarrassed for a young lady so well practised in breaking hearts, but—the truth must be told, and *mirabile dictu!* the coquette was caught, like many another, in her own net. She loved the knight,

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but until this moment she knew not her own heart, nor the *real* nature of the sentiments she entertained toward him. But her eyes were at length opened, and the scene which followed her answer to his "declaration" can "be better imagined than described." When they joined the party (who had been anxiously seeking them in the garden) they found them in the act of taking leave of their amiable entertainers, and with a brief adieu the "happy pair" turned their steps homeward.

What happened in that moonlight ramble I am not able to relate; but when the knight parted from his fair companion he was seen by the Chevalier Fire-fly, who had just returned from escorting a noble dame home, to press, *unrebuked*, the lips of his lady-love—was it wrong? I will leave *that* for my fair readers to decide, for surely they must *some* of them have had experience in such matters, or those bright eyes now brightening this dull page sadly belie their owners. Your vivid imagination too, fair lady, needs not to seek the sequel—enough for you to know that in after years the knight of the Beetle was often heard to bless the evening of The Insect's Ball.

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BERTHA COURTLAND.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

"BERTHA, my dear, come and sit on this stool by my side, I have something to say to thee.

"Wait a moment, father, till I have tuned my guitar, and then I can practice this sweet air while you are talking."

The old merchant, though an austere man in his warehouse, was, like many of his class, indulgent to a fault to the members of his family. So he sat quietly in his arm-chair, with an open letter in his hand, while his daughter, Bertha, the spoiled darling of his widowed heart, went on screwing up the keys of her guitar, trying the strings with her slender white fingers, and humming snatches of a song, as if utterly forgetful that her father had spoken to her.

"Make haste, child, I am waiting," said the old merchant.

"One moment, father, while I shorten the band; there, now, it just fits;" and flinging the black ribbon over the whitest and most beautiful neck in all New Amsterdam, she seated herself at her father's feet, and raising her smiling face to his, said—"well, now, what do you want to say? Be quick, for I have not half got my lesson."

The old man had scarcely commenced the subject, which, from the gravity of his face seemed to be somewhat important, when Bertha struck up a lively air, and completely overwhelmed his voice. Even his habits of indulgence could not withstand this. He impatiently grasped the little hand which wandered like a restless bird over the strings, exclaiming:

"Listen to me, Bertha, this subject is of importance."

"I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear father! Pray, what were you talking about?"

"This letter has just arrived from Boston," said the old man, raising the open sheet in his hand.

Bertha caught a glance at the seal. She knew the crest; that careless, half-provoking smile instantly vanished from her face, and her voice faltered as she said:

"Well, father, where is he now?"

"In Boston, dear, on his way to claim his betrothed."

For a moment Bertha's face wore a thoughtful expression. She turned away her eyes, and after a little hesitation, said:

"I have made up my mind—that is, I had rather not marry Lord Gilbert."

"Nonsense! not marry Lord Gilbert? Pray, what has given rise to this new caprice?"

"Oh! I've a thousand reasons. I dare say he is abominably ugly, and as proud as Lucifer."

"On the contrary, child, he is deemed one of the handsomest men in England; and as to pride, methinks his willingness to take to wife the daughter of a humble provincial merchant is sufficient proof against that. Nay, start not up and look so proudly, child; I tell thee this same English Lord might have his choice among the fairest and highest of his own proud land; and a humble maiden like thee, Bertha, should deem it high honor when he casts his thoughts so much beneath his own level!"

"But Bertha Courtland, merchant's daughter though she be, deems it no honor to be bartered off unseen, and certainly unloved, like an article of merchandize! I say again, I will not marry this Lord, who thinks to drag me from my own dear home at a moment's warning, and to install me into his proud dwelling, like a Dutch toy, only to be endured for its gilding—for conceal it as you will, father, I know that this coronet is to be purchased with a dowry, such as no English noble can count down to his titled daughters."

"Thou hast nothing to do with that, child," said the old man with some degree of confusion, "and if thou hast no better reason to give——"

"But I have a better reason—I will not wed Lord Gilbert—because—because—I intend to marry somebody else."

"Marry somebody else!" and the astonished merchant started up, as if a bullet had passed through his heart. "May I be permitted to ask what high personage has been selected for my son-in-law?"

"Certainly, father—it is the music-master you have been so good as to allow me."

"A music-master! My daughter marry a poor, beggarly, tramping fidler!—a——"

"Don't get in a passion—don't, father, I entreat you!" exclaimed the malicious girl, trembling all over, and yet half laughing at the storm she had raised.

"A passion! a passion! By my father's soul, if I thought, child, that this were not badinage—mere idle sport, I would turn thee into the street this instant."

Now Bertha Courtland knew just how far to extend her power; so, instead of braving her father's anger, she threw her arm over the guitar, and retreated into the garden.

Though Mynheer Courtland was, as I have said, by no means remarkable for mildness of temper, he never indulged in the luxury of anger beyond the precincts of his counting-room, and always reserved the highest ebullitions of his wrath for the special edification of his clerks and retainers. It was, therefore, with no little astonishment, that the passers-by saw him issue from his house with a face as red as a peony,

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and flourishing an open letter in his hand with the most startling ferocity of manner. Had it been a drawn sword they would have run for their lives; but being only a piece of harmless paper, they stood still, opened their mouths, and wondered what on earth could have come over Mynheer.

Some very wise man has said that habit is second nature. If this be true, it had been the merchant's nature, for twenty years, to descend the steps of his dwelling about ten o'clock each morning, with his dress arranged in the extremity of neatness. After gazing for a moment up and down the street, he would fold his hands under his coat behind, and thus walk leisurely to his warehouse, bowing graciously to the acquaintances whom he passed on his way, and in every manner deporting himself with the staid dignity befitting a man of trust and substance. But this morning the merchant outraged his habits terribly. His wig was awry, his coat unbrushed, and his shoes, with their broad, silver buckles, lacked their usual exquisite polish. Without stopping for a moment on the steps, he clasped his hands under his coat, for it is to be doubted if he could walk with them in any other position, and hurried along the pavement as if propelled by a double power locomotive.

Mynheer Courtland's warehouse stood by one of the few docks at that time in New Amsterdam, for our story relates to one of the earliest periods of what is now the vast metropolis of New York; and he was hurrying along the side of the wharf, in the situation we have described, when a porter, running at the top of his speed to overtake a sloop just starting for Albany, came in contact with him, and the merchant, losing his equilibrium, tumbled into the river. Fortunately the water was not deep enough to drown him, or all would have been over with Mynheer; but sinking in the mud, there he stood, his bald head just rising above the surface of the stream, spluttering and struggling, yet only working himself the deeper in the mire for all his efforts. It might at last have become a serious affair for Mynheer, though he called lustily, for New York was not then settled as thickly as now, and no one was within hearing.

The unlucky merchant had nearly exhausted himself in vain struggles, and was sinking deeper and deeper in the mud every instant, when a youth, apparently a foreigner, with eagle eyes and hair like the wing of a raven, happened to pass, and saw his situation.

"Can I do anything for your assistance, friend?" he inquired, kindly.

The luckless merchant made one more desperate effort to speak; but lost his footing, and his head suddenly disappeared beneath the turbid water. The youth flung his velvet cap upon the pavement, stripped off his coat, and plunged into the dock. He soon succeeded in fishing up the unfortunate merchant, and supporting his head above the water, called out lustily for assistance. This was soon rendered, and Mynheer Courtland was safely conveyed to his warehouse.

A servant was despatched for dry clothes and a new wig, and Mynheer Courtland lay upon a bench in his counting-room in his dripping garments, completely exhausted by his cold bath, when the foreign youth who saw that he could be of no farther service, was about to retire. The merchant observed the movement, looked up and recognized his daughter's music-master; the very man whom half an hour before he had resolved to kick from his door-steps, did he ever presume to ascend them again. The youth stood very quietly with his cap in his hand, while the old man's face changed from a look of astonishment to a haughty frown, which, after a moment, gave place to an expression of warm-hearted gratitude, such as a kind man would feel toward one who had saved his life.

"Young man," he said, grasping the hand of the youth, "this day shall be a fortunate one for you, as well as for me; I pledge you the word of a grateful and an honest man."

The youth bowed, and muttering something about an engagement, hurried from the warehouse. Meantime, Bertha had proceeded to a fountain in the garden, where, as the season was summer, and the weather pleasant, she had been in the habit of receiving her music lessons. A rustic seat stood at the foot of a drooping elm, which shadowed the green sward around the fountain, and a thicket of roses rendered the retreat fragrant and secluded. Bertha looked upon the vacant bench and then upon the sun. It was full time, and yet no master had arrived. She busied herself in gathering the roses and scattering their leaves, and half open buds, upon the water in the fountain; then tiring of this, she seated herself on the brink of the marble basin and began to dip up the water in her little palm, and to shower it on the flowers blushing about her. At length, heartily impatient and half pouting, she flung her guitar on the grass, and sauntered away into a more secluded part of the garden, where, for the first time in her life, she began to reflect, seriously, about the future. She was standing with her hands clasped under her apron of wrought muslin, and her sweet, oval face turned away with an expression of more serious thought than usually visited her beautiful features, when the music of a guitar came tinkling, with a sweet, merry sound,

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through the rosebushes which surrounded her. A smile broke over her face, like the flash of warm sunshine; her hands unclasped, and she darted forward with the graceful eagerness of an uncaged bird. The youth, whom we have already introduced to the reader, was sitting beneath the elm with her guitar in his hands.

"And so my lady-bird has learned to come at her master's call," he said, with a quiet smile, as the panting girl placed herself on the bench beside him.

"And for a very good reason, because she never expects to obey it again," replied Bertha, striving to look sullen, and obeying a sudden impulse to make her lover miserable for having kept her waiting.

The youth looked in her face, where a smile was struggling with affected gravity, and said, with undisturbed tranquillity. "Well, my pretty termagant, what new quarrel have you picked with me now—was my last visit too short, or my lesson too long?"

Bertha shook her head very demurely, and tried her best to look solemn and important. "You will not speak so lightly when I tell you that my father has received a letter from the English Lord, whom I have told you of, and that he has come over here to carry me to England." While she was conveying this startling intelligence the mischievous girl stole a glance, from under her long lashes, to mark its effect upon her lover. A slight color spread up to his high, white forehead, and a very peculiar smile disturbed the repose of his expressive lips; otherwise his composure remained undisturbed.

Bertha was puzzled and more than half angry —"I *will* make him feel," she said in the bottom of her roguish little heart; so she looked as resolute as possible and went on, "yes, my father is determined that I shall fulfil the engagement which he has made for me, and I think that I shall obey him——"

"That is right, my sweet Bertha! It is a daughter's first duty to make her parents happy; and after all, what is there so very terrible in being married to a rich, well principled man, whom your father has chosen with a reference to your own exaltation and happiness?"

At her lover's interruption, Bertha started and raised her eyes to his with an expression of astonishment, which deepened as he spoke into absolute dismay.

"Are you serious?" she inquired, in a tremulous voice.

"Perfectly so!—for notwithstanding all the pleasant nonsense which we have talked together, you cannot suppose that *I*, a wanderer, without country or name, would drag you from an opulent home—cause you to break the heart of a good father, and expose you to all the ills of poverty and repentance, for repentance would follow! Or, to reverse the picture, that I should content myself as the hanger-on of your father's bounty, and become a pensioner on my wife's fortune. In neither case could we be happy; nor could I be just in uniting your fate with mine."

Bertha turned her head away, and anguish was, for the first time, busy with her heart. It was more than a minute before she spoke; then her voice was cold and constrained, and the smile which she strove to force died away in a tremulous motion of the lips. "We have forgotten our lesson—hold the music for me, if you please." And taking her guitar she went over the lesson with a calmness that surprised herself. But she did not sing; that had been beyond her power. When she had finished, she arose, and said—"I think you pronounce me a tolerable proficient on this instrument; call at my father's counting-room and he will reward your services; I shall not require them in future." And with a slight inclination of the head she turned to leave the fountain.

The youth followed and laid his hand on her's. "Bertha," he said, "forgive me if I appear unfeeling, if—" but she shook his hand off, and, with a haughtiness of spirit, for the first time called into action, swept by him and entered the house.

Bertha found her father in the sitting-room; his heart was overflowing with kindness and gratitude. "Come hither child and kiss me, for I have determined to make thee happy—happy in thy own way," he cried, opening his arms to embrace his daughter. Bertha threw herself on his bosom and burst into a passion of tears; and when the old merchant went on to tell her of the peril he had been in, and of the generous conduct of the foreign youth, the poor girl only wept more bitterly than before.

"Don't weep, Bertha," said the old man, kindly, "I will have no more to do with this foreign marriage; thou shalt wed the youth tomorrow, if thou wilt."

"No, no, father, I will not!—I wish to marry Lord Gilbert, and make you happy."

"Then, after all, thou wert only jesting this morning, and I, like an old fool, got angry about a shadow!"

"Yes, father, it was all a jest—a very, very unfeeling one; yet still but a jest!" and Bertha's tears redoubled as she spoke.

"Well, then, I will send off my answer to Lord Gilbert, and a thousand pounds to the good youth."

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"Send him two thousand—half your fortune! He is poor, and proud, and—" Here Bertha began to cry again, and sobbing out something about a head-ache, she left the room.

Early the next morning Mynheer Courtland sent a purse of gold, with a letter of thanks, to the music-master; but the servant returned with word that the youth had discharged his lodgings and had left for Boston, whence he intended to sail to Europe.

The preparations for Bertha's bridal were commenced on a magnificent scale. At length a King's ship made its appearance in the harbor, and news was brought that Lord Gilbert had arrived. Bertha declined seeing him till they should meet at the altar; but the merchant visited him at his inn, and returned home absolutely beside himself with delight. The wedding morning brought a pretty, three cornered note from the bridegroom, with a case of diamonds, such as had seldom blazed on the brow of a Duchess. The bridesmaids were in ecstacies, and even Bertha's pale face brightened a little when she saw the gems sparkling among her soft, bright tresses, and felt them upon her white arms and neck. She was sitting in her dress of white satin and mechlin lace, with the jewels twinkling like starlight through the delicate folds of her bridal veil, when a carriage swept up to the house. The bridesmaids rushed, in a body, to peep through the windows.

"There he is!—that is Lord Gilbert—the tall, slender one with black hair!" exclaimed the foremost. "Bertha, do come here one moment. Why! where has she flown to?"

Poor Bertha—she had taken advantage of the confusion and had stolen into the garden, that she might have one moment of solitude before her destiny was sealed for ever. She hurried forward to the fountain, and threw herself on the bench where those dear, dear music lessons had been given. The place had been neglected of late; the fountain was half choked up with leaves, and the rosebushes were drooping and out of blossom. Everything looked desolate; but the heart of the poor bride was most desolate of all. She leaned her cheek against the rough trunk of the elm, and, burying her face in her hands, abandoned herself to sorrow. She was sitting thus, with tears trickling through her slender fingers, and falling, unnoticed, on her bridal dress, when a hand was laid softly on her arm, and a familiar voice pronounced her name.

That voice!—It went to her heart like a gush of music. She looked up, and he whom she had driven from her presence, in scorn and anger, was standing by her side. She forgot her engagement—her pride, everything—in the dear consciousness of his presence, and sprang to his bosom as joyfully as a frightened bird flies to his nest-home in the green leaves.

"My own sweet Bertha?" whispered the youth, laying his palm, caressingly, on the warm cheek, whose fellow was nestled in his bosom, "look up, love, and say that you forgive me all the sorrow and anxiety I have occasioned you."

Bertha's arms tightened about his neck, and she murmured, in a soft, happy voice, "I forgive all, everything, only say that you will yet save me from this marriage."

"And has it never occurred to you that you may have been deceived? that your affianced husband, may have sought to win the heart before he demanded the hand of his fair mistress; in short, that the humble music-master and Gilbert Foster may be the same person? Nay, struggle not to free yourself from my arms, sweet bride. Is not your lover the same, in all things?"

"Can this be sober truth?" murmured the young girl, doubtingly. "What you, so kind, so gentle and good. *Can* you be the proud, fastidious Lord Gilbert, whom I so feared? Indeed I cannot understand it!"

"Do not try, love. Remember, we have a whole life-time to explain in. Let us go to the house now, the minister is waiting. Do not tremble—there is nothing so very terrible in the ceremony!"

"No, there is nothing terrible in it *now*," whispered the happy Bertha, as Lord Gilbert Foster drew the bridal veil over her face and raising her hand to his arm, led her from the fountain which had witnessed their first and last quarrel.

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